

For some time now there has been a lot of discussion about the possibility of our town having a Wellness Centre featuring a swimming pool and other amenities.

With that in mind, shortly after becoming Mayor, we began this process to support this possibility.

A Council committee was established and there have been preliminary discussions with the YMCA as well as a town-sponsored survey intended to gauge support and interest for such a facility from residents and the business community within our town and nearby communities.

Based on the overwhelming response to this survey, an application for funding has been submitted to the Federal Government (via ACOA) to conduct a more in-depth feasibility study to better determine the scope and cost of what such a facility might look like.

Our discussions with the YMCA have also included the potential for housing an onsite daycare center in the Wellness Centre. This obviously has the potential to meet two important goals: (1) help meet current demand within our community and surrounding region for valuable childcare space and (2) create a revenue stream to assist in offsetting the facility operating and maintenance costs.

The results of our survey also revealed some concern among residents about the costs of operating and maintaining a Wellness Centre including the potential for tax increases. Naturally, our goal would be to limit the financial impact on residents by exploring all viable revenue streams including government partnerships, corporate sponsorship, fundraising events, membership fees, as well as daycare centre revenue.

As a previous health care professional, I am well aware of the overwhelmingly positive benefits a Wellness Centre brings to communities, both from a physical and mental health perspective as well as from a social perspective. Wellness Centres provide opportunities for exercise and physical activity, individual and group fitness programs as well as improved mobility and overall, more positive health outcomes. It is also well established that people who engage in even minimal exercise see improved mental health, increased energy and a more positive outlook. From a social perspective, Wellness Centres allow for increased social engagements and interactions between peers – in particular, for people of all ages and abilities within our community.

All of course at an affordable price.

My commitment to you is to continue to explore the viability of a Wellness Centre serving our community and our region. Over the past four years, on numerous occasions, many of you have expressed to me your strong desire to see such a facility within our community. I have listened and I am in full support of continuing to move this process along. I look forward to the results of the feasibility study which we will share with you and which will provide us the data needed to determine the next steps. in this process.

Once again, I ask for your support on October 2nd so that initiatives such as a Wellness Centre receives due consideration as we work together and continue to explore opportunities and initiatives that benefit you, our residents and taxpayers.