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Skate lending in Ward 18

March 28, 2011

On Fri, Jan 7, 2011 at 3:46 PM, Wendy Jang <wjang@toronto.ca> wrote:

Hello Kay:

The City of Toronto Skating Programs do not offer city-operated skate rentals. There is a contracted skate service at Nathan Phillips Square, and community-operated skate services at Dufferin Grove, Campbell Park, and Wallace Emerson rinks.

While we recognize the value of having skates available for residents, there are several reasons why the City-operated programs have resisted offering skate rentals:

- 1) Customer Expectations: Keeping an inventory of skates in enough popular sizes - Residents expect that a rental operation will have sufficient inventory to meet the needs and are disappointed if the service provider does not have sufficient inventory - Ward 18 rinks have enough skates to satisfy the people who come - and to match rink capacity. See #7 for details.
- 2) Liability: Ensuring the inventory is in suitable condition - Skates must be kept in reasonably good condition, as skaters could sustain an injury if the equipment is ill-fitting or faulty, or if the blades are not sharp. There are costs involved both in materials and staffing, to ensure that equipment is inspected upon return, and not stored for future use in a damaged condition.
 - Skates are inspected when returned, and skaters' comments (if any) are noted.
 - Any problem skates are taken out of circulation until they can be repaired or culled.
 - Skates are sharpened once or twice a week depending in usage.
 - Insoles and laces are replaced as needed.
 - Skates that develop an odour are sprayed with an anti-fungal skate spray.
 - To pay for good skate maintenance, there is a suggested donation of \$2 for skate loans. Some people give more and that makes up for those who have no funds to donate.
- 3) Liability & customer expectation: Ensuring skate blades are properly sharpened - Skates that are too dull will cause a skater to slip or fall, or may not be able to allow the skater to stop effectively. (See #2).
- 4) Liability & customer expectation: Blades should be sharpened after every 10 uses, and normally that would apply to someone who looks after their own skates. - Again, cost becomes a factor as well as time for inspection of the blades or tracking the usage of a particular skate/size. Since skaters all have their own idiosyncrasies and may walk onto concrete or other surfaces that damage blades, some skates will need sharpening more frequently. (See #2. All skate borrowers are warned NOT to walk on concrete. If people still do it, they are asked to return their skates, and they may be put on a "no-loan" list.
- 5) Space & costs & liability: Storage & Distribution of the skates - Need a facility where skates can be organized by size and easily accessed by the staff. As well, the room needs to have conditions that do not promote the growth of bacteria or mold, as sweat needs to be able to dry in the skates after use. Almost all rinks have some extra space. At Dufferin Rink, City carpenters fitted skate shelves into the room that holds the water

heaters for the zamboni. At Wallace Rink, City staff added shelving in an extra changeroom that was not used by skaters. None of the extra spaces are humid in the winter.

6) Cash Handling & Risk Management: A cash float needs to be maintained, based on the rental fee. If credit cards are used, an authorization procedures needs to be established. to provide an appropriate audit trail, receipts are supposed to be issued and a cash register/point of sale system should be used. Depending on the value of the daily transactions, security of the money including the cash float, need to be considered to avoid risk of robbery or theft. The cheapest way to cover skate maintenance and replacement costs is to base the skate lending on *suggested donations*. This means that the cash on the premises is not excessive (we find cash is between \$60 on quiet days and \$300 on very busy days), and cash handling (and book-keeping) are very simple. Mature, trusted individuals should do the lending. Every transaction (skates, stick, gloves, pucks, tape) is written in the skate lending book. If desired, there can be spot-checks on random days comparing cash intake and the skate-lending tally in the skate lending book, which will balance.

7) Cost of materials and staff resources: - Costs that we do not have in our current budgets include purchase and maintenance of a skate inventory, purchase of supplies to keep inventory viable (e.g new laces, spray disinfectant), space to store & distribute skates, shelving etc for skate storage, skate sharpening equipment, vault to store monies including cash float, staff wages to operate rental operation & sharpening operation. The three Ward 18 rinks got their skate supplies (skates, sticks, helmets, gloves, insoles, laces, etc.) through a combination of

- NHL PA donations
- rink user donations, and
- purchase using skate loan moneys.
- Public buildings tend to have sufficient extra space for storage.
- After the third year of skate loans at the Ward 18 rinks, enough loan donations had been collected to buy a skate sharpening machine.
- The loan donations also cover the cost of staffing the lending and the maintenance (see year-over-year income listing below).

Our current practice for Toronto East York District is to consider skate rentals and sharpening only if there is an outside service provider. The above was a general summary of considerations, please let me know if I can clarify any of these points. We were happy to see that this past Family Day, the City arranged for skate loans at several additional rinks. Outside providers supplied the skates, but we think that the City could do this even better. The big problem with outside providers is that they need to make a profit, and that requires fees which sharply limit access for lower-income skaters including families, children, and youth. **The mandate of municipal rink staff is to provide maximum access to diverse rink users.** This can best be done with in-house skate lending.

Skate lending donations, rink season 2007/2008

December: \$3074.33

January: \$3164.64

February: \$1760.33

March (to March 16): \$863.80

Skate lending donations, rink season 2008/2009:

December: \$3412.88

January: \$2955.41

February: \$2585.50

March (to March 4): \$187.05

Skate lending donations, rink season 2009/2010:

December: \$5872.69

January: \$4397.36

February: \$3027.51

March (to March 4): \$18.50

Skate lending donations, rink season 2010/2011:

December: \$6880.69

January: \$4783.68

February: \$3343.07

March (to March 11): \$539.45

Skate lending donations, rink season 2009/2010:

December: \$5872.69

January: \$4397.36

February: \$3027.51

(March 18.50) → to 4th

Skate lending donations, rink season 2010/2011:

December: \$6880.69

January: \$4783.68

February: \$3343.07

March Duff 539.45 Mi-

rink season 08/09

total: 9140.84

Dec. 3412.88

Jan 2955.41

Feb 2585.50

March 187.05

(1-4th)

rink season 07/08

total 8863.10

Dec. 3074.33

Jan 3164.64

Feb 1,760.33

Mar 863.80 (1-16th)

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Skate Rental Maintenance at Ward 18 Rinks

Schedule

Monday: 6 hours skate sharpening at Dufferin rink*
Tuesday: 6 hours skate sharpening at Wallace rink*
Wednesday: 5 hours skate sharpening at Campbell rink**
Thursday: 5 hours skate sharpening at Dufferin rink*

(* all skate sharpening took place in the morning- as it was seen as the least disruptive time)

(**on occasion skate sharpening occurred during the evening at Campbell – this was to accommodate – machine transportation)

On a daily basis, rink staff are responsible for inspecting equipment to make sure it's safe to use, removing damaged equipment from circulation, and performing minor skate maintenance (replacing insoles and broken laces, re-taping hockey sticks, spraying the inside of skates with antibacterial disinfectant, etc.). This takes place alongside other duties. Throughout the day, staff keep an eye out to make sure people are treating the equipment with respect. While the skates aren't valuable enough to steal - people are not very interested in a pair of skates with bright yellow spray-paint down the sides and the number "84" written in permanent marker - people need help remembering to stay off the cement and not to leave their skates under a bench while they go to the mall.

Over the 2010-11 rink season, four staff were trained onsite at Dufferin rink to use a portable skate sharpening machine (Alain Heese-Boutin, Laura Macdonald, Matthew Leitold, Michael Monastyrskij). Over the course of the season, skates needed to be sharpened frequently as they dulled with use, and the collections needed to be inspected to ensure that all the skates were in good working order. Staff sharpened the skates, looked them over and removed any that were not safe to use from circulation, replacing them when possible with new donated skates. They also sprayed the skates with disinfectant, and replaced broken laces and insoles.

Staff were also responsible for moving the skate sharpener from rink to rink, to allow it to be used the following day at another location. This was done using the staff's personal vehicles, or in co-ordination with the roving cluster co-ordinator. The equipment is compact enough to be moved by hand with a two wheeled dolly, although not in all weather conditions!

Laura and Alain were generally responsible for maintaining the skate collection at Dufferin rink. This involved two skate maintenance shifts, on Monday and Thursday of each week. This rink had more staff time allotted to maintaining its skate collection because it was typically the busiest of the three rinks. Often skates would be very dull by midweek, so a second maintenance shift was added to address this. Both shifts were 5-6 hours long.

Alain was also generally responsible for maintaining the skate collection at Wallace-Emerson rink. This was also a high traffic rink, though not as busy over the course of a week as Dufferin. Alain was assigned one 6-8 hour shift per week doing maintenance on Tuesdays.

*Michael was generally responsible for maintaining the skate collection at Campbell rink. He worked a 4 hour maintenance shift on Wednesdays, although this would sometimes run longer if the skates required more attention.