Morinville negotiating after secret offer to purchase arena by unnamed party

“On Tuesday, August 6, a Special Meeting of Morinville Town Council was held to address one Closed Session agenda item, “Potential Sale of Ray McDonald Sports Center,” states a release from the town of Morinville on Aug. 8. “This meeting was a direct result of Administration receiving a letter of intent from a third party about facility. At this meeting, Council directed Administration to negotiate a sale agreement for the Ray McDonald Sports Center Arena. Currently negotiations are solely focused on the arena portion of the facility.”

According to the release from the town, Council based its decision to further investigate the potential sale of the arena on the following:

“The sale of the facility will result in a savings of up to $2 million in demolition costs presently projected for the 2020 capital Budget.”

“It will remove a liability from the Town while still retaining a facility/service asset to the Community; “An additional facility in the community will encourage economic growth and spinoff.”

“The town states that “once the draft Sale Agreement is prepared, Administration will bring it forward to Council for its consideration.” However, the town initially passes a resolution to keep even routine agreements secret from taxpayers and electors.

A timeline has not yet been established for negotiations. “We are working closely with the potential buyer and we will keep the community updated on the progress and any further developments in a timely manner. At this time, we are unable to disclose information on the potential buyer,” states the town.

Despite the town not having issued a call for proposals for potential purchasers of the facility, the town states: “As we are committed to looking into all options that are presented to the Town of Morinville, we have directed Administration to further investigate the sale of the Ray McDonald Sport Center Arena,” in a quote attributed to Barry Turner, Mayor of the Town of Morinville. “We have also asked for all the due diligence to be completed. This will all be reviewed, along with the draft Sale Agreement, before any decisions will be made.”

Not only has the town not publicly issued a request for proposals (RFP), it has been stated that there are no opportunities to do so – on its website under the title of ‘Bids, RFPs and Tenders’ the town states “We provide open and equal competitive bid opportunities, in accordance with our Purchasing Policy, so we seek the best value for our community. “Current opportunities: There are no current opportunities at this time.” The statement was on the Town of Morinville website on Aug. 7, the same day the town announced that it was negotiating with the secret potential buyer for the Ray McDonald arena.

The Ray McDonald arena shares a common wall with the Morinville curling rink, which intends to continue operations in the existing location.

No explanation for the urgency of a special council meeting was given, with council having one regular council meeting scheduled in each of July and August and the Mayor’s commitment to have all options regarding the arena disposal expected to take months. In addition the Mayor’s statement that the town’s due diligence must be done before any decision will be made pushed the decision back even further, if the process is anything other than superficial.

The arena is owned by the residents of Morinville.
Morinville fitness facility announces intent to close at end of September

"It is with a heavy heart that we are writing this as an official notice that the BodyShop Fitness Facility will be closing our doors effective September 30, 2019. This has been a very difficult decision as we so value our members support and patronage throughout the years," owner Brad Boddez stated in a press release Aug. 9.

The fitness facility has operated on 100 Ave directly across from the Morinville Public Library for 15 years. "When we decided to start this journey and open our business 15 years ago in 2004, it was purely out of consideration of our community. I didn’t want to see the residents of Morinville and the surrounding area, without a place to get healthy both physically and mentally. When we heard of the local gym was suddenly closing, we started the business plan in motion."

Boddez noted this situation isn’t unique within the industry. "History has dictated that the life span of many small fitness facilities is not very long. Sometimes big franchises come in and the smaller gyms can’t compete, or other times the clientele just isn’t there. We, at the BodyShop, want to thank all the residents of Morinville and area who have supported our facility over the last 15 years. We could not have sustained our business if it was not for your support. As our reputation is important to us, we feel that those members who have memberships that extend past the September 30th date, will be accommodated in early October.”

He also recognized the contributions of staff as well as business partners Gib and Lili Boddez, his parents, for their work and expertise in keeping any down time with equipment minimal while ensuring standards have been maintained at the facility.

Joe Pelletier 780-974-1440

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For more information, contact us
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Alberta, Canada T8N 1K2
T: 780.459.7711
F: 780.458.3213
gsacrd.ab.ca

DID YOU KNOW that MCHS is one of the top-ranked schools in Alberta for student achievement?
**Division 2 By-Election set for Tuesday, September 17**

**Voter Eligibility:**
- Individuals can vote in the Division 2 by-election if they:
  - are at least 18 years old;
  - are a Canadian citizen;
  - are a resident of Division 2 of Sturgeon County on election day (September 17, 2019);
  - have presented acceptable identification; and
  - have not already voted in the by-election.

Visit sturgeoncounty.ca/election for more information.

**Seniors Workshop - September 12**

Connect with local seniors ages 50+ on September 12.
This full day workshop includes a hot breakfast, lunch, and some fun with Louis Pizzani and his Mind Magic.
There is a presentation by STARS Air Ambulance, an Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s Disease panel discussion and information about Sturgeon County Walking Trails.
Return transportation is available from communities in Sturgeon County, but seats are limited.

To attend, please register online at sturgeoncounty.ca/programs by September 5. If you need help with online registration, call 780-939-8334 or stop by the Sturgeon County Community Services Office, 9610-100 Street in Morinville next door to Dryden Insurance.

**Household Hazardous Waste Round-up - Sept. 21**

Starting your fall clean-up? Certain household wastes need special treatment.
Things like antifreeze, paint, solvents, batteries and cleaning fluids can be harmful to the environment.
That’s why we’re offering county residents an opportunity to do the right thing and put hazardous waste in its place,
Items should be tightly sealed in original or clearly labeled containers.

For a full list of items accepted at the Household Hazardous Waste Round Up, visit www.sturgeoncounty.ca.
Namao Flower and Bench Show

Date: August 17, 2019    Place: Namao Community Hall

Entry Fees: $1.00 per entry
Judging August 17, 2019 (11:30 am to 2 pm)
Public Welcome at 2 pm      (Coffee, Tea and Goodies will be served)     Door Prizes

PHOTOGRAPHY

The 2019 theme for photography is “Single Flower Close-up”

For a complete list of rules and classes please visit our website at www.namaoag.ca, call Theresa at 780-973-5516 or email info@namaoag.ca

PRIZES AWARDED:
• 1st Place - $5.00 per class
• 2nd Place - $4.00 per class
• 3rd Place - $3.00 per class

BEST OF SHOW:
• Flower Class $50
• Baking Class $50
• Preserves Class $50
• Craft Class $50

REGISTRATION OF ALL ENTRIES: August 16, 2019 6pm to 9pm
FLOWER SHOW: August 17, 2019 9am to 11:30am

BEST OF SHOW:
• Flower Class $50
• Baking Class $50
• Preserves Class $50
• Craft Class $50

JUNIOR ENTRIES:
• 4-6 yrs
• 7-9 yrs
• 10-12 yrs
• 13-15 yrs
• Adult Entries 16+

JUNIOR PRIZES:
• 1st Place - $5.00
• 2nd Place - $4.00
• 3rd Place - $3.00

MOST UNUSUAL FLOWER CLASS:
• Showcasing the Pantone Colour of the Year - Coral - $25.00

For a complete list of rules and classes please visit our website at www.namaoag.ca, call Theresa at 780-973-5516 or email info@namaoag.ca
It was close at first, but Spencer Desmond inched forward in his “Turbo” snail cart as Brayden Pelletier in the oilers cart featuring McDavid’s #97 fell behind during heat #2 of the Fete Au Village Soapbox Derby event in Legal on July 27th.

—photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock
Contact a councillor with your priorities

Morinville town council returns on August 27th. The agenda for that meeting has not yet been posted. I would encourage everyone to contact a member of council to express those priorities you feel need to be addressed in the remainder of the year, and moving toward budgets for 2020.

I am hoping to see:
- Monthly updates on numbers utilizing the leisure center, with updates on operating costs, debt paydown, etc.
- It would like to see the numbers for accidents at the intersection where the Shell and McDonalds have opened.
- With the new school opening, drop offs, pick ups, buses, etc I would like to know the plan. With kids walking to and from that school, and no sidewalks, again I hope plan is communicated soon.
- Discussion on council and mayor’s pay should be on a agenda. Personally, I think the adjustment should fairly reflect the take home loss experienced by council because of tax changes. I have no concern with fair pay for council, but it is up to us, the taxpayer, to expect value for any money.
- I know there is much more. Make it known to your council.

Thank ahead.

Participate for all our futures.

—Dan Otway, Morinville

Correction

There were 18 racers in the Legal Soapbox Derby, using 10 cars. Some of the cars were used by more than one driver. Some photo captions in the Aug. 6 editions indicated the incorrect number of racers.

Correction

The shut down of the Associate Medical Clinic at the end of September will not mean the loss of the only medical clinic in Morinville, as stated in an article in the Aug. 6 edition.

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& Dr. Katie Wittig General Dentists

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The FREE PRESS, Morinville/Gibbons, Alberta, 780-939-3309, email: morinville@shaw.ca, www.cowleynewspapers.com, Tuesday, August 13, 2019, Page A7
The face and structure of agriculture continues to change at a rapid pace says Hnatiw

Over the past 15 years the number of farms in local counties decreased by about 40 percent. Thorhild and Smoky Lake counties showed a significant increase in the number of very small and very large farms. Sturgeon County had a slight increase in very large farms and a decrease in small ones.

Statistics Canada reported the following data on size of farms from its 2001 and 2016 Census of Agriculture. Sturgeon County reported 615 farms in 2016, 42 percent fewer than its 1,055 in 2001. Thorhild County’s 333 farms in 2016 were 40 percent fewer than its 584 record in 2001. Smoky Lake County CAO Cory Ollikka noted the continuing trend of the last 60 years of rural depopulation in Canada was “was both predict- ed and prescribed” by a federal white paper in 1969. The increase in farm size was a natural outcome because the amount of farmland stayed fairly unchanged while the number of farms and farmers decreased.

“Thinner margins and aging demographics of farmers have been significant factors in this consolidation over the years,” said Ollikka. “Farmers also have a base extender of several factors.

One is the conversion (rental or ownership) of land that is margin- al by its small size, configuration, or productive capability into pro- ductive purposes that don’t fit in large production models. Small triangles of muskog land might not serve large grain farms but are perfectly suited to pasture goats or cows of a smaller farm, or a 10 acre farmyard that was subdivided from a quarter section can still raise pasture poultry.

Another factor is the growth in demand for food products from artisan agriculture in niche-marketing.

“There are producers of all nearly types of food using this model, and some of the products have a really high value compared to the number of acres needed to produce them,” Ollikka said. “Vegetable farming is a good example.”

He listed other factors as increased awareness of food security issues that prompt owners of small parcels of land to grow their own food and grow and diversity of other sub-sectors such as eco- tourism or agritourism, which are usually done in conjunction with artisan agriculture.

The number of farms listed by size with the 2016 data followed by the (2001 data) follows.

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<td>Total</td>
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<td>317</td>
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<td>Under 130</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>109</td>
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Sturgeon County mayor Alanna Hnatiw said, “The face and structure of agriculture continues to change at a rapid pace. I think there are a number of reasons for the change. We are seeing less of the younger generations who are interested in taking over the farm. And those new generations migrating to cities and those who are interested in diversified agriculture.

Succession planning, attracting labour with the scales of economy make bigger farms more attractive.

She said the scales of economy make bigger farms more sustainable while the growing interest in local food and agri-tourism creates diverse operations.

“Small scale farms can also be a natural extension of several factors.

Farming has become more specialized farming like micro farms sometimes indicate a lifestyle, or the traditional way of life about business instead of the traditional way of life as it was in the past (for some).”

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Wet parking fields result in cancellation of this weekend’s airshow

Edmonton Airshow organizers have cancelled the 2019 edition of the airshow at Villeneuve Airport, citing the persistent wet weather that has saturated the fields used for airshow parking, causing significant operational and safety concerns.

“We are deeply disappointed by this decision,” said Steve Maybee, president of the Edmonton Airshow. “We had more rain forecast over the next week, it is unlikely the fields will dry out in time, making parking safety almost impossible.”

The muddy parking conditions would mean hundreds of truck vehicles, only made available to park safely. Stock vehicles would also cause traffic backups on secondary roads and main thoroughfares. Stuck vehicles will dry out in time, making parking fields safe. As well, vehicles would cause traffic backups on secondary roads and main thoroughfares. Stuck vehicles will dry out in time, making parking fields safe.

The cancellation announcement does not affect the 2020 airshow, which is under way to be the biggest and best yet with the introduction of air races and expanded business and career elements. Organizers states that ticketholders can keep their tickets for the 2020 airshow or receive a refund. 

“Ensuring safety is our number one priority,” said Maybee, president of the Edmonton Airshow. “We advised the airshow organizers that due to significant rainfall, we cannot permit use of the airshow parking due to the risk of spectator safety, emergency and airport vehicles getting stuck. “We advised the airshow organizers that due to significant rainfall, we cannot permit use of the airshow parking due to the risk of spectator safety, emergency and airport vehicles getting stuck.

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“With more safety concerns.”
Award winning artist at 15

by Amy Hibbard-Riccio

Sofia Soria is a young artist who is making gains in recognition. This started at a young age when she would colour in her colouring books and be very particular about staying in the lines when her peers would be scribbling with various colours anywhere on the page to “colour” the picture. Her mother, Ursula Stachniuk, says that, “I would leave her alone — she was allowed to colour in her books. Her Grandmother coloured a page and went out of the little lines. I told her she was very upset!” Sofia laughed and agreed that she is very detail oriented and it likely started back then.

Sofia says she would “doodle” during class and go through piles of paper with 15 minute mini-masterpieces. Following presentation of rough sketches of anything that she’d see or imagine; and those early doodles earned attention from her peers. Ursula said she attempted to get Sofia into the Redwater Art Society at age 9, but they only had members aged 17+. There wasn’t an outlet for Sofia to share her love of art with others her own age. It didn’t stop her though. She would draw sketches of friends as she got more and more confident. She has a number of sketchbooks with unfinished work. Sofia says, “I listen to music and it sets the mood for the tone of my art work. I try to show emotion through the drawings.”

Sofia became more serious about her artistic ability when she started attending her Morinville Community High School art class with Mrs. Tara Ricicoppo. Ricicoppo appreciated Sofia’s talent and would present her with opportunities to participate in non-school related assignments. During her grade 9 year, Sofia created a piece entitled “Elders Wisdom” which was inspired by a poem of the same title that encompasses stories of Elders in the community who were survivors of residential schools. A print of her art piece is featured on the Truth and Reconciliation Wall at Fort McMurray as a gift. Hare, also a member of the Fort McMurray Elders Wisdom and John Lennon. The two pieces were created for the group even at her young age.

Following presentation of Elders Wisdom, and The Lion, Doreen Stachniuk, Founder and President of the Alberta Community Arts Club Association (ACACA) Zone 5, noticed Sofia’s pieces. She presented it to the Nistawoyou Friendship Centre in Fort McMurray as a gift. Here, also a member of the Redwater Art Society brought Sofia to the club and advocated for her to work at her craft with the support of the group even at her young age.

Sofia entered all three pieces into the youth category of the Alberta Community Arts Club Association (ACACA) Zone 5, and was awarded 1st place for Elders Wisdom and John Lennon. The two pieces moved on to the ACACA Alberta Wide Show in Drumheller. John Lennon received the Harry Wohlfarth Drawing Award. This is a special award for the top juried artwork in drawing for the show across all categories. Hence, the masterpiece has moved forward to be featured at the “Best of the Best” Alberta Spirit Show. --photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock

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Sturgeon County, Alberta T8R 0R8

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Angus bulls. Quiet, easy – A MUST SEE – Lower level, Triplex, 2 Hemi 4X4. Lots of Beautiful 3 bedroom home. in Sturgeon County 55503 Studio Space for 1-844-453-5372. BBB Approved other conditions causing restrictions in daily HIP/KNEE REPLACEMENT. Trouble walking or 99 information info@loveyourdancestudio.com for more Hire - Perfect for group class activities such as Dancing, Yoga, Karate & Fitness - Large open space with mounted wall mirrors - Daytime - Evening - Weekends. Call for rate and availability. Heated Canola, peas, wheat, barley & Grain, 1-800-282-6903 ext 200. HEATING METAL ROOFING & SIDING 3+ colours available at over 55 Distributors. 45 year warranty. 24-48 hour Express Service available at supporting Distributors. Call 1-888-263-8254.

FEED

WANTED CANOLA, peas, wheat, barley & oats. Dry, wet or heated.AlbertaFeed.com 888-445-8798

HEALTH

GET UP TO $50,000 from the Government of Canada. Do you or someone you know have any of these conditions? ADHD, Anxiety, Arthritis, Asthma, Cancer, COPD, Depression, Diabetes, Difficulty Walking, Fibromyalgia, Irritable Bowels, Overweight, Trouble Dressing, and hundreds more. All ages and medical conditions qualify. Call the Benefits Program at 411-3155 or send a text message with your name and mailing address to 41138305 for your free benefits package.

RADWAY RECREATIONAL, Studio Space for Hire - Perfect for group class activities such as Dance, Yoga, Karate and Fitness - Large open space with mounted wall mirrors - Daytime - Evening - Weekends. Call for rate and availability. Heated Canola, peas, wheat, barley & peas for feed. Buying damaged or off grade grain. "On Farm Purchase" Western Feed & Grain, 1-817-230-6232

RADWAY RECREATIONAL -オスラウトドール協会 - スタジオ スペース トーナメント・イベント・レッスン - 大きなオープンスペース - 壁掛け式の镜子 - ダイア テム - エベニング - ウィー ケンドス. キャリファリーを活用した価格と利用可能。 乾燥, 濕った, または乾燥と湿った。 Buying oats, barley, and other grain. 1-800-282-6903 ext 200.

SPORTS

Long Jump, Triple Jump, High Jump, Pole Vault, Discus, Shot Put, Javelin, Hammer Throw, Weight Lift, Swimming, Running, Cycling, Tennis, Hockey, Soccer, Basketball, and many more. Alberta's weekly newspapers are being read by hundreds more. All ages and medical conditions qualify. Call the Benefits Program at 411-3155 or send a text message with your name and mailing address to 411-38305 for your free benefits package.

CRIMINAL RECORDS? Why suffer employment/licensing loss? Travel/business opportunities? Be embarrassed? Think: Criminal Record. US entry waiver. Record purge. File for a pardon and now remove the embarrassing criminal record by obtaining a pardon in Canada. Do you or someone you know have any of these conditions? ADHD, Anxiety, Arthritis, Asthma, Cancer, COPD, Depression, Diabetes, Difficulty Walking, Fibromyalgia, Irritable Bowels, Overweight, Trouble Dressing, and hundreds more. All ages and medical conditions qualify. Call the Benefits Program at 411-3155 or send a text message with your name and mailing address to 411-38305 for your free benefits package.

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Recruitment - Register in your free benefits package.

To order a pardon in Canada, contact the Alberta Justice and Legal Services, 100-1000 100 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5J 2Y7. Call 780-427-9331 or email info@pardons.ca. You must meet the eligibility requirements and pay the $1000 pardon fee. The pardon process can take up to 18 months. Your record will be erased from the criminal record database and your rights to citizenship, employment, and travel may be restored. For more information, contact the Alberta Justice and Legal Services.

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TRAVEL

BLANKET The Province with a classified ad. $260 (based on 25 words or less). Reach over 100 weekly newspapers. Call NOW for details. 1-800-282-6903 ext 200. www.alprintads.com

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DRYWOOD

SPRUCE UNSPLINT - 1/2 cord $130, full cord $260. 780-719-0344.

FIREWOOD

1/2 cord $130, full cord $260. 780-719-0344.
Isabella Maynard enjoyed some family time at the Fete Au Village festivities in Legal on July 27th. Here she is holding an Albino Ball Python presented by Zoo2U. --photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock