

New home for gymnasts

Council gives approval to \$2.89 million Delta Sport Development Centre in Ladner

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The Delta Gymnastics Society will soon be getting a bigger and better facility in Ladner's civic precinct.

"It's a huge milestone in our history," said Mark Friesen, the society's executive director. "This facility will be able to accommodate our increasing demands and provide all of Delta better access."

The Delta Sport Development Centre, a \$2.89 million undertaking, will become the permanent home of the gymnastics club by early next year.

The last hurdle was cleared Monday night when Delta council awarded the construction contract, prompting applause from the small crowd that had gathered at municipal hall awaiting the decision.

The building, which will include a 15,500-square-foot gym, large lobby and all the amenities the club requires, will be located immediately north of the Ladner Leisure Centre.

"The increase in available space will accommodate the demand we have been facing for so many years," Friesen said. "We will be able to offer much more and have the ability to run multiple programs at the same time."

The gym club currently serves over 4,500 participants and has many still on waiting lists.

The skate park will remain on that site but will be moved closer to the street to accommodate the new building.

"We will replace the skate park and we will do that as soon as possible," said Ken Kuntz, Delta's director of parks, recreation and culture, adding he has received many phone calls from people concerned about the future of the skate park.

The budget for the project will see \$1.2 million coming from the Delta Gymnastics Society, \$938,500 from Delta and \$753,000 from the federal government.



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Construction of the Delta Sport Development Centre will begin soon adjacent to the Ladner Leisure Centre. The building, which must be completed in a year to qualify for federal funding, will be the new home of the Delta Gymnastics Society.

Kuntz said activity will be seen on the site by mid-April. The federal government grant was awarded with the stipulation the project be completed by March 31, 2011.

In December, Delta Gymnastics received a \$753,000 Recreation Infrastructure Canada Program grant towards the expansion of its current home at the South Delta Recreation Centre. Shortly after being approved for the funding, the Corporation of Delta proposed a new facility in Ladner.

"The idea was proposed by the city with the idea that a Ladner location would better provide services to all three communities within Delta [Tsawwassen, Ladner and North Delta]," Friesen explained.

By February, proposals for the new facility were received and evaluated and by the middle of March, notice was received the federal funding would be transferable.

Once Delta Gymnastics moves out of the South Delta Recreation Centre, the area it occupied will be converted into a community gym.

"We are going to operate that gym similar to how they run Sungod," said Coun. Robert Campbell. "It will be open play and used as a community gym, especially for teens and young people."

The new facility will feature many green elements, including a geo-thermal heating and cooling system.

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