

South Algonquin council discusses request to use Lester Smith Community Centre

By Mike Riley

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At their meeting on June 6, South Algonquin Township council discussed an email request from Whitney resident Shelly Grice to use the Lester Smith Community Centre without charge for the Yoga classes she's been holding in the township since May 9. After discussing the issue, they declined her request to use the building for free for the classes, but she was subsequently allowed to do so if she made a donation to use the facility.

South Algonquin Township council discussed the motion read out by Bryan Martin, the CAO/clerk-treasurer, at their June 6 meeting, for Grice to use the Lester Smith Community Centre free of charge to hold the Yoga classes she teaches in the township.

In her May 31 email, which was included in the June 6 council agenda package, Grice had asked permission to use the Lester Smith building for one to two hours per week over the summer free of charge for the Yoga classes. She pointed out that she'd be able to offer a reduced rate if this were to occur and although they had many benefits, there would be less restrictions overall from where she was holding the classes now, at the Mad Musher [Restaurant] and at her home.

After discussing the matter, council ultimately voted against allowing Grice to use the Lester Smith Community Centre for free over the summer. Their rationale was that it would prompt others with similar businesses to want to use it, that she should have gone through the recreation committee and that since she was charging for the classes, there should be a charge for the facility.

Grice's Hatha Yoga classes are offered from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and each class is \$10. The classes are suitable for all levels, ages and genders, and have gotten a lot of community acclaim.

Grice told Bancroft This Week on June 12 that she'd received a request from one of the councillors thanking her for her email and to call them.

?Once on the phone, I was told I could use the space if instead of free, I paid by donation instead. I agreed and will be starting the necessary paperwork today to get this process started. So, in the next couple of weeks, Yoga will hopefully be offered in the Lester Smith building a couple of times a week,? she says. ?I am still currently at the Mad Musher and using my home and plan to continue offering yoga in these spaces as well.?