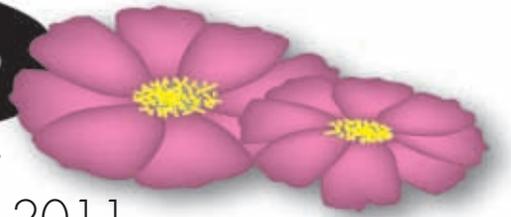


# The Uxbridge COSMOS



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**HITTING THE ICE** - These avid aficionados of Canada's game were among the participants at the pond hockey tournament hosted on Elgin Pond Saturday afternoon by the Uxbridge Youth Hockey Association. On another rink, Uxbridge's team, the Bruins, are getting ready for the playoffs. See pages 4 and 9. Photo by Stuart Blower.

## Skateboarders will be homeless this summer

by Veronica Blake

The youth of Uxbridge will almost certainly have to take their skateboards elsewhere this summer.

The skate park behind the sewage treatment plant was dismantled in October. While a new skate park is in the works, it will not be ready in time for this season. The Township has budgeted \$30,000 for 2011 for the planning and design phase of a new park, but construction will not begin until next year, with a tentative \$370,000 in the 2012 budget.

Vanessa Slater is the director of the Uxbridge Youth Centre and hopes to find an interim solution for skateboarding youth this summer.

"We're concerned about what happens in the spring when these kids have nowhere to skate," she said. "I think a lot of kids are going to get ticketed for skating. Merchants and residents will probably be complaining."

A ticket for breaking the skateboarding bylaw is a minimum fine of \$130. Without a

park, there are few options for youth.

On Feb. 7, The Uxbridge Youth Centre came to council, proposing portable ramps in a temporary location, such as the arena parking lot, until the new skate park is built. These ramps could then be incorporated into the new park next year.

But the money in this year's budget for the park would only cover finding a location, design of the park and taking soil samples.

Currently, Uxbridge youth will have to travel to Newmarket, Markham or Toronto to find the nearest skate park. Ms. Slater and the Uxbridge Youth Centre may have to organize a road trip for their skateboarders in the meantime.

"We know it's an inevitability," she said. "We just hope it happens sooner, rather than later. It could be a jewel in the Township of Uxbridge. You would be getting people from all over Durham."

The former location behind the sewage treatment plant had poor visibility from the road and a new location will have to be easily accessible. Ward 4 Councillor Jacob

Mantle has been named skate park liaison for the Township and will help determine the new site for the park.

"Skateboarding is not a fad," Mr. Mantle said. "It's not here today, gone tomorrow. It's a popular sport. We have a responsibility as a Township to be involved in what kids are involved in. We put a lot of money in our baseball diamonds and arenas, this is no different."

There are 2,200 youth aged 11 to 19 in the Township of Uxbridge. A survey in January by the Uxbridge Youth Centre asked high school students if they would use a skate park at Kennedy House, with 26 per cent of students responding, 'Yes.'

Mr. Mantle is working with the youth, reenergizing the Facebook Group, 'I support an Uxbridge skate park,' which has been relatively inactive since 2009. The group has over 500 members in support of the park.

"We need to keep the kids

engaged in the process," he said.

Ms. Slater agrees. But it is frustrating for the youth of the skateboarding committee when visible progress is not made.

"As in any bureaucracy, things take time," she said. "And youth don't get that."

As for Mr. Mantle, his skateboarding days are over, but he says once the new park opens, he will "definitely get the board out for an inaugural spin."

Uxbridge Brook from Seventh Concession by Renee Leahy

