

Roof not unsound

An engineering report discussed at the Nokomis Town Council meeting on Wednesday evening, July 16 has confirmed what many local residents suspected all along: the Nokomis School gymnasium roof is not structurally unsound – it simply has a few leaks.

In a knee-jerk reaction to a cursory inspection, Horizon School Division officials two years ago declared the gym roof structurally unsound, padlocked the doors, and closed it to further use. They then arbitrarily declared that it would cost at least \$750,000 to repair or replace the roof. All this without a thorough engineering report.

Thanks to the diligence and persistence of the Nokomis School Community Council, and the Town of Nokomis, an independent engineering firm was engaged to do a professional assessment of the roof's condition. That assessment was discussed in detail at the last week's Town Council meeting, along with the five options proposed as possible solutions to repair the roof. The most viable options appear to be to put a cap over the existing roof, using the existing walls to support it. That was the solution to a similar problem experienced at another area school more than 20 years ago, and it has served that facility well over the years.

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In deference to the good work done by the School Community Council, HZSD has apparently agreed to cost-share the independent engineering study, and its further work of developing costing estimates for each of the five proposed repair options. Nokomis Mayor David Mark (also a member of the School Community Council) is confident that those costing estimates will come in well under the HZSD's initial estimate of \$750,000. Councillors noted that it is very unfortunate that it has taken this long to get to this stage of the process, with the gym being closed, the roof continuing to leak, and on-going water damage occurring to the interior of the facility that will no doubt significantly increase repair costs. They deplored the fact that HZSD's neglectful maintenance has led to this situation, but expressed optimism that the renewed senior administration at HZSD will be more helpful and cooperative going forward.

-Editor