

Ottawa Stadium contender wins extension to modify bid

BY NECO COCKBURN

The lone group to submit a bid to use the Ottawa Stadium this year has two weeks to resolve some outstanding issues with city staff.

The Ottawa Stadium Group is proposing to bring an Intercounty Baseball League team to the stadium, which could also play host to some Can-Am League games.

OSG was the only group to submit a formal bid after the corporate services and economic development committee decided in December to accept proposals for use of the stadium this year.

City staff had a deadline of Feb. 1 to determine the winning bid, but when the deadline passed with no announcement, there were concerns that the proposal had been derailed. Councillors went in-camera to discuss the bid during a council meeting on Wednesday.

David Butler, the group's chief executive, said he's confident a deal will be finalized. Some of the outstanding issues involve "securing all of our obligations under the lease," he said.

"Nothing has really changed," Butler said. "Our rent numbers are the same, our expenses are still the same, they've just reorganized the type of security that we need to provide on those expenses."

Bay Councillor Alex Cullen said there were "problems" with the original OSG proposal, "but we're giving them a second chance and hopefully we can sort it out."

The issue is expected to go before council on Feb. 24.

Orléans Councillor Bob Monette, who has been a strong supporter of bringing baseball back to the stadium, said staff will continue to negotiate with the group "and we're hoping on the 24th to have a final motion that makes it 'play ball' in Ottawa."

