

From: McNair Consulting [<mailto:mcnairconsulting@rogers.com>]
Sent: Thursday, November 02, 2017 8:27 AM
To: Wendy Cooke <Wendy.Cooke@barrie.ca>
Cc: <OfficeoftheMayor@barrie.ca>; Bonnie Ainsworth <Bonnie.Ainsworth@barrie.ca>
Subject: FW: Proposed waterfront baseball stadium

Wendy:

As we discussed yesterday afternoon, I would like to make a deputation to Council next Monday night in opposition to the motion presented at General Committee regarding the following item:

FEASIBILITY STUDY REGARDING OF A POTENTIAL FAMILY ORIENTED SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITY IN THE CITY OF BARRIE

The attached letter was previously sent to the City on this proposal on October 12, 2017.

Please confirm that you have received this e-mail request.

Regards,

Alan McNair, MCIP, RPP
Conservation Chair
Brereton Field Naturalists' Club

October 12, 2017

Re: Proposed waterfront baseball stadium east of the Southshore Community Centre

Mayor Lehman and Members of Council:

Our Waterfront parkland is often called Barrie's jewel. It needs to be looked after and protected for all the people, not built over for a stadium and paved over for parking to service it or to charge us admission to enter our own parkland.

Our City's population is targeted to grow from just over 141,000 (2016 census) to 253,000 by 2041. That means more than 110,000 additional residents in less than 25 years!

Just to be able to stroll or cycle through our waterfront parkland, to absorb the restorative peace and calm of the open green and wooded natural areas and the views and vistas of Kempenfelt Bay, is a major reason why people want to live in Barrie. Even the drive-by vista from Lakeshore Drive eases our minds and makes us want to get out and walk nearer to the water's edge.

Our public waterfront green space will be sorely needed to maintain and enhance our individual and collective mental health as Barrie absorbs all these newcomers in the coming years. We are so fortunate that past Barrie City Councils purchased this waterfront over time and have preserved it as open green space. And remember the uproar that was created when the last Council briefly considered selling off a portion of Bayview Park (now Sam Cancilla Park) to assist a proposed waterfront condo project!

Nothing should be developed on our waterfront parkland which would fence off any part of this precious and scarce resource from free and open use by the citizens of Barrie at any time of the year. A baseball stadium would fence off and wall off this area of our waterfront from free public access all year round.

The City has already invested heavily in building the Barrie Community Sports Complex at Midhurst, including Coates Stadium, nine other illuminated ball diamonds and seven soccer fields, for many of the same uses as are being suggested for this waterfront stadium. Perhaps the owners and operators of the Barrie Baycats (which is a private commercial business) should consider providing shuttle bus service for Barrie residents as part of their ticket prices, in order to attract more fans to the apparently underused 1500 seat Coates Stadium.

The proposed 3-4000 seat baseball stadium may or may not be needed somewhere in Barrie, but it does NOT belong on Barrie's waterfront. 20,000 square feet of commercial concessions in the stadium would not likely benefit existing businesses in the Downtown or along Essa Road. Stadium visitors would be unlikely to walk the necessary distance to support these commercial areas. Once back in their cars, they can then drive anywhere in the City, or out of it, if they intend to spend on meals or other entertainment.

The Brereton Field Naturalists' Club participated actively in the development of the Waterfront and Marina Strategic Plan approved by Council in 2015. We will continue to advocate for the maximum open accessible green space along our City's waterfront. We note that this Waterfront Strategic Plan illustrates wooded green space to the east of the passive landscape features identified as Military Heritage Park. There is no suggestion in the strategic plan of any structure like the proposed baseball stadium on the waterfront, nor should there be!

The lengthy extent of Barrie's waterfront green open space embracing Kempenfelt Bay is far more desirable, more to be envied by other communities and more 'iconic' than any stadium will ever be.

Please say "Thanks, but No Thanks" to pursuing this project. Our Waterfront jewel will not be improved by adding this diamond!

Sincerely,

Alan McNair, MCIP, RPP

Conservation Chair

Brereton Field Naturalists' Club

BFNC DEPUTATION TO BARRIE COUNCIL ON POTENTIAL SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITY - NOV. 6, 2017

Mayor Lehman and Members of Council:

The Brereton Field Naturalists' Club (BFNC) was founded in Barrie in 1951. Our aims are to acquire and share knowledge of natural history, to protect wildlife, and to stimulate public interest in nature and its preservation. The Breretons advocate the protection of significant green spaces and corridors in the planning process for our high-growth region.

BFNC has a long history of working collaboratively with the City of Barrie on such endeavours as:

- **Waterfront Heritage Trail Working Group**
- **North Shore Trail Working Group**
- **Active Transportation Working Group**
- **Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Stakeholder Advisory Group**
- **Age Friendly Communities Steering Committee**
- **Park Master Plans for Sunnidale Park and Little Lake Park**
- **Ecological Inventory of The Gables Park**
- **Tree Planting Programs in City Parks with LSRCA**
- **Submissions to the City on the Waterfront & Marina Strategic Plan, Natural Heritage Strategy, Barrie Official Plan**

We wish to raise the following objections to the recommendation to Council from General Committee regarding this proposal:

FEASIBILITY STUDY REGARDING A POTENTIAL FAMILY ORIENTED SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITY IN THE CITY OF BARRIE

1. That a Working Group/Task Force be established to undertake a study to investigate the feasibility of locating, constructing and operating a potential family oriented sports and entertainment facility within the City limits.

The City has already budgeted in 2017 to update the City's Parks & Recreation Master Plan which will look at all recreation facility and programing needs in the City. This Update is the ideal opportunity to consider the need, possible locations and associated costs for any additional future sports facilities without making any single project a priority ahead of time, as we feel would be the case with the proposed Special Working Group/Task Force for the stadium project.

2. That staff in the Legislative and Court Services Department report back to General Committee regarding a proposed terms of reference for the Working Group/Task Force.

Any such terms of reference should specifically exclude our Waterfront parkland from consideration, for the reasons outlined in this deputation, in our letter of October 12 to Council, and in the many detailed submissions already received by the City in opposition to the proposed waterfront stadium project. There is no need to locate such a facility on our public waterfront open green space.

Also, who decides the composition of this Working Group/Task Force?

3. That the Working Group/Task Force's joint feasibility study include the following aspects:

a) Community consultation to be undertaken throughout the Summer and Fall of 2018 to gauge support regarding locating a family oriented facility within the City limits, preferred locations, the demand for and potential usage of such a facility, including:

- i. Discussions with area businesses, residents and potential user groups;
- ii. Public information sessions;
- iii. A random phone survey;
- iv. Surveys at events; and
- v. Social media.

The City consulted extensively over several years in developing the Waterfront & Marina Strategic Plan, which this Council adopted in 2015, only two years ago. BFNC was actively engaged in submissions and deputations to Council during that process.

Nowhere in the Waterfront & Marina Strategic Plan can we find any suggestion to build a stadium anywhere on Barrie's waterfront. That Plan also made no recommendations for any form of development on the site east of Military Heritage Park, which recently has been proposed for a stadium.

There is no need for further consultation that involves such a use on our public waterfront parkland so soon after the waterfront has been thoroughly investigated and commented on by the community and Council.

b) The opportunity to offset any capital and operating costs through sponsorships, fundraising and revenues from fees; and

Council has recently committed to investigate a fundraising strategy to redevelop the Fisher Auditorium. This could include community fundraising, soliciting grants from federal and provincial government sources, and some amount of City taxpayer funding.

BFNC has already gone on record supporting Council's decision to pursue this unique and one-time opportunity to restore this theatre facility.

We feel that the pursuit of similar funding sources for a stadium at the same time will dilute the opportunities for success of the Fisher Auditorium project.

c) The operating model of the potential facility including a parking strategy.

No waterfront parkland should be given over for developing parking lots or buildings for such a major facility. We understand there are only 500 parking spaces to serve the entire central waterfront and all its activities. The City Zoning By-law requires an additional 1000 parking spaces for a 4000 seat entertainment establishment at 1 space per 4 persons.

Just think of 1000 more parking spaces on our waterfront and all the resulting traffic congestion from stadium events!

4. That a maximum of \$50,000 be allocated from the Strategic Priorities Reserve to fund the City's portion of any costs associated with the external consultants and/or contractors associated with the community consultation phone survey and feasibility study.

What is the additional cost of City staff time and resources to explore the stadium proposal, which is not included in this \$50,000 maximum?

We feel that this is an unnecessary expenditure of taxpayer dollars when we already have a process, the Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update, which can consider this proposed project in proper balance with all other competing indoor and outdoor recreation needs in the City.

If Council decides to proceed with the special process outlined in the General Committee motion, it is imperative that:

- **the process be transparent;**
- **the City own both the process and the report;**
- **the City should pay the entire cost for this effort to a maximum of \$50,000 for all external and internal resources, to avoid any perception of bias; and,**
- **a full public separate financial accounting is provided to City taxpayers.**

Further, we are concerned that the City now has created a process where the taxpayers could be spending up to \$50,000.00 every time some person or organization approaches Council with what they feel is the next "great idea". We would like to know what criteria were used to create this "special process".

That is why we strongly encourage that any investigation of such a facility takes place as part of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update.

This matter was recommended (Section "D") to City Council for consideration of adoption at its meeting to be held on 2017-11-06.

One Council member asked me last week if there is any ecological importance to the proposed waterfront stadium site. I walked through the area this past weekend, following the well-worn paths which are signed as Wildflower Trails leading off the Waterfront Trail, and noted the numerous northern red oak trees of varying ages growing along the wooded rise to the south of the Waterfront Trail, in the area which would undoubtedly be impacted by the proposed stadium. These native oak trees can reach an age of 200 to 400 years.

Barrie has just opened the nearby Military Heritage Park, a peaceful, contemplative space for reflection on our military history and the sacrifices and horrors of war, and which includes the planting of twenty-five Vimy Oaks, nurtured in Canada from acorns brought back from the site of the 1917 Battle of Vimy Ridge in World War I France.

How ironic, that we could even be considering damaging or destroying our own local, natural, native northern red oak stand growing so close to the new memorial park, while honouring oak trees which originated so far away. To destroy our natural wildflowers while planting tulips and poppies nearby seems a strange method of remembrance.

To sum up our request to Council:

1) If Council decides to consider a stadium project somewhere in Barrie, this should be considered as part of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update, and we save \$50,000 which could be used for other community benefits.

2) If council chooses to proceed with the proposed special study process for a stadium project somewhere in Barrie, then it should follow these 4 points:

- the process be transparent;**
- the City own both the process and the report;**
- the City pay the entire cost for this effort to a maximum of \$50,000 for all external and internal resources, to avoid any perception of bias; and,**
- a full public separate financial accounting is provided to City taxpayers.**

3) Regardless of the process, no waterfront location for a stadium needs to be considered, for the many reasons outlined in this and other recent submissions and petitions to Council opposing this project on Barrie's waterfront.

Thank you for considering our deputation.

Alan McNair, MCIP, RPP

Conservation Chair, Brereton Field Naturalists' Club