



Port Dover Minor Hockey Association
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Mayor Chopp and Councillors
Norfolk County
50 Colborne Street South Simcoe,
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Norfolk County Arenas

Dear Mayor Chopp & Councillors:

I'd like to take a moment to express my concern on behalf of PDMHA (Port Dover Minor Hockey Association) regarding the recent release of Norfolk County's 2020 Tax Budget. There is no doubt that new solutions and some creative thinking needs to be applied to address the current financial situation we find ourselves in. As the largest user group using Port Dover Arena, we would be more than happy to sit down and be a part of the solution. However, any solution that would see any Norfolk Arenas close in 2020 would be a rash and unnecessarily drastic measure.

Philosophically speaking do we really want to limit and reduce the amount of fitness opportunities that our youth have? Do fiscal constraints take precedent over their health and well-being? Many of you have been deeply involved in youth athletics and know first-hand the razor thin line between families choosing to participate, or not. Make no mistake the shifting of user groups to other areas will cause added time, money and stress that will likely result in a significant drop in participation for all user groups.

Logistically speaking the timeline set out for immediately closing one arena and initiating the Private Arena Management RFP Process will prevent PDMHA and other Associations from moving forward with preparations for next season. With no cost certainty, no idea when and where our teams will be playing, or what new parameters we could be operating under, these decisions will make it all but impossible to avoid major operational issues in 2020.

Emotionally speaking, Port Dover has been through this before when it lost PDCS, having one of its institutions ripped away, eroding the connection between its youth and their community. Do we not owe a certain level of service to the people of these communities? The arena is one of the last places that our young people gather and develop lifelong bonds. Our community members built these arenas, they have been the heart of our communities for decades, they are more than just numbers on a spread sheet.

In conclusion, we understand that Norfolk County needs to address some serious economic realities and we are more than willing to work with the County, our community and other user groups to find solutions to these problems. Let's take the time that these decisions deserve. Explore if private ownership actually saves money in the long run, investigate whether partnerships with local user groups could yield surprising results, and give people in these communities the opportunity to apply their considerable expertise and find a solution that keeps all our arenas open.

Sincerely,

Shawn McMillan

President Port Dover Minor Hockey Association