

Request for this letter to be included in the Correspondence for the Feb. 17, 2021 Council Meeting

February 15th, 2021

Dear Mayor Crombie, Member of Council and City Staff,

Re: Request for your Reconsideration of Decision to Remove the Burnhamthorpe Community Center Outdoor Covered Arena due to Concerns on the Redevelopment Plans of the Burnhamthorpe Community Centre.

Considering the impact the Covid-19 reality has had to governments including municipalities around the world it is requested that you reconsider the demolition of the outdoor covered arena at the Burnhamthorpe Community Centre as well as for the community centre's redevelopment plans at this time. Plans and decisions for this redevelopment and outdoor covered rink removal were all made prior to March 2020.

The plans and discussions by City staff for the Burnhamthorpe Community Centre's (BCC) redevelopment which included the 'decommissioning' of one ice pad began over 4 years ago and are included in the Council approved *2019 Recreation Master Plan* as part of the Capital Infrastructure Changes. Throughout this time period these redevelopment plans and potential removal of one 'ice pad' were never brought to the attention of the Ward 3 residents in any public engagement sessions inviting and allowing residents to give their feedback on what kind of facilities they would like to see available at their local community center as well as to give their input on the City's plans on the decommissioning of one local 'ice-pad'. There was no mention of any of these plans in the Ward Councillor's newsletters nor email updates prior to September 25, 2020.

For the building and redevelopment of the Churchill Meadows Community Center and Meadowvale Community Center community engagements meetings inviting and welcoming the residents to give their feedback and to be part of the City's planning process were held much prior to decisions being made and Council approved. The first time that the communication of the BCC's redevelopment plans was made to the Ward 3 residents/community at large was on Sept. 25, 2020 from the Councillor's email update informing residents of an open house presentation that was to take place on October 1, 2020 from 3 pm – 7 pm.

As a result, From the City's *Our Engagement Strategy*, July 2017 and updated in 2019 document, the mandated strategies as to be followed by City Staff for most effective communication between City and participation and involvement from residents for plans being considered in a community were clearly not followed for the changes that were being considered at the BCC and the Outdoor Covered Arena.

In the City's *2019 Recreation Master Plan* reference is made to aquatic and gym facilities as well as other more up-to-date and accessibility changes to be included in this 28 million dollars plus city expense approved in the City's 2018 budget. Nowhere in this document is the plan for the permanent removal of the outdoor rink at the BCC location directly made. However, it is indirectly made known by points made that one 'ice pad' would need to be 'decommissioned' between the existing ice pads at Miss Valley and Burnhamthorpe CC. And, under the Capital Infrastructure Needs section of this document page 26 (44) on the table at the bottom right of the page with information for 'Arena Distribution and Service Levels' the BCC outdoor covered rink is not included in the rinks being considered in the stats that are provided.

Could the exclusion of the BCC outdoor covered arena from this consideration indicate that already it had been pre-planned by City staff that the BCC rink would be the rink to be decommissioned even though it was not directly noted anywhere else in this Plan?

The statement of the Burnhamthorpe's outdoor rinks having reached the end of its life cycle is questionable. Has the life cycle of the Woodhurst's City run rink in West Mississauga also come to its end? Both the BCC outdoor rink and Woodhurst's were built only a few years apart from each other in the mid to late 1970's. Is the City also considering demolishing that outdoor rink for the same reason of it having reached the end of its life cycle?

In mid-December 2020 after Mr. Galati's online petition as well as news media coverage in early January 2021 brought much awareness to the thousands of residents of the City's plans to remove the BCC outdoor arena with over 8,200 supporters to date, City staff then proposed meeting with the community to discuss the possibility of relocating this outdoor rink to Gulliden Park next to the BCC or at the Jaycee Park across the street from the BCC. The cost of rebuilding this complete outdoor covered arena of its size and value is very likely much greater than maintaining and keeping it at its present location.

The additional importance of this outdoor rink is its history and heritage and the fact that it was fully constructed with funds raised by the residents and Ward 3 Rate-payer Associations. The Burnhamthorpe Community Centre Building Committee was created and in the early 1970's through the **Buy a Brick Campaign**, as well as with many fundraising events, collected \$100,000 with the goal to donate this to the City and contribute to building the local BCC community center. The monies were then used for the BCC's outdoor rink with the purpose that it be available for free skating for all residents of Mississauga. No other City facility in Mississauga's history has been built with full donations from residents and rate-payer associations of such a significant amount to date. This \$100,000 amount from the mid 1970's is valued today at well over \$600,000.

This is not sentiment based but on facts as well as a part of the BCC's and the City of Mississauga's history. For this reason, the BCC Outdoor Arena should be recognized as one of the City's Landmark locations and highlighting the residents' and Rate-payers' personal contributions and donations of that time to the City for this outdoor rink's construction. Below is a photo of the first **Golden Brick** celebrated by then Mayor Chic Murray, Ward 3 Councillor Bud Gregory, Lucille Firth from the Forest Glenn Ratepayers and members of the BCC building committee:



Which would be more cost efficient for the City: the demolition of and rebuilding this same outdoor covered arena at either one of the parks near the BCC or keeping this unique Mississauga facility at its present location and maintaining it accordingly as well as preserving its historical significance between the residents with the City?

Perhaps, reviewing and reconsidering the other designs that are available for the BCC's redevelopment can again be made; and especially so after the many immediate and long-term financial challenges to the City from Covid-19.

The request is being made for you to consider all the above points and please make the decision to not destroy the BCC Outdoor Covered Arena. And, along with community engagement meetings, together with residents and City staff the review/reassessment of the proposed designs for the redevelopment of the BCC can be made.

The BCC outdoor arena is not only a part of the City's history and heritage but also an asset to the community of Ward 3 and for all residents in Mississauga; As well as being the only facility of its kind in the City.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Athina Tagidou

Ward 3 Resident and member of the Applewood Hills & Heights Residents' Association