

February 15, 2021

From: Joe Galati, Mississauga Resident, Petition Starter for **“Save Mississauga's Only Outdoor Covered Hockey/Skating Rink from Destruction in March 2021”**

To the Mayor of Mississauga, Ward Councillors, and City Executives,

On behalf of over 8,200+ people that signed the petition, of which 3,000+ are Mississauga residents, we are deeply disappointed that Ward 3 Councillor Chris Fonseca motioned to reject the petition and refuse, once again, to collaborate and hear the voices of citizens.

When I started the petition, I first asked the City's Legislative Services Division if it could be online at Change.org to participate in COVID SAFETY as recommended by health officials from the Government of Canada, Province of Ontario, and City of Mississauga. And, I was told “yes” so I set up the petition on Change.org.

For my deputation on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021, a “City of Mississauga Agenda for Council” posting occurred the week prior and my petition was never listed because already refused.

So, the City waited for over 5 weeks, and well over 7,000 signatures to inform me on the day of my deputation to City Council that the Ward 3 Councillor is refusing to accept my petition to which the Mayor and all Council agreed.

For the February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Council Meeting, the agenda was also posted the week prior. Now, I can see that a petition is accepted and entered on the record by Devendra Tiwari to “Reject rezoning application OZ/OPA 20/014 W11 & 21T-M 20/003 W11, 6616 McLaughlin Rd, Mississauga”. What is interesting is this petition is online only for COVID SAFETY with both the resident name and signature TYPED via computer entry (no handwriting) and only lists the Ward number and no address whatsoever.

Whereas, my petition on Change.org that was rejected by City Council (motioned by Ward 3 Councillor Chris Fonseca) has resident name, city, province, postal code, country and date signed. In addition, my petition has the disclaimer that the signatory's information will be made public whereas Devendra Tiwari's does not.

The disclaimer I refer to is the following taken from the City's petition template and listed at the bottom of my petition on Change.org (and not on Devendra's):

*“INFORMATION RECORDED ON THIS PETITION BECOMES PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH MUNICIPAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT. Information on this form is solely for the purpose of determining*

*whether or not a majority support the request and is maintained in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSO 1990, c.M.56."*

So, why the double standard regarding the residents of Mississauga that want to object to the way the City kept the intended destruction of Chic Murray Outdoor Covered Arena (or as of January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 referred to as Burnhamthorpe Outdoor Rink on Active Mississauga and other materials) secret since the Recreation Master Plan written in 2018, released January 2019 and approved February 2019?

After my deputation, we heard Chris Fonseca state she asked City staff in 2019 to save the outdoor rink because she was told it would have to be destroyed. The problem we residents have is why did Councillor Fonseca keep this secret for 3 years rather than collaborate with residents to see if and how it should be kept for her ward and the entire City? Why were 99.5% of residents in Ward 3 or the City at large uninformed until a few months before the rink was slated for demolition? Councillor Fonseca sent out a flyer to some residents in December only after the outrage demonstrated by the growing petition signatures and widespread media attention about the story. A newsletter emailed, a printed flyer mailed to each home or phone broadcast during the collaboration phase could have occurred in 2019 or early 2020. Yet, this was kept secret until October 1, 2020 because the indoor arena was to be decommissioned and instead the outdoor rink was the sacrificial lamb.

You know, the Mississauga News just made this a front-page story delivered to most every resident February 11, 2021.

If you take away a rink with a roof, then residents want two outdoor refrigerated roofed rinks as compensation to catch up with Toronto, Oakville and Brampton who all have done a better job encouraging residents to get outside and embrace the Canadian tradition of ice sports namely skating and hockey. Without a roof, this is a waste of time because global warming reduces utilization. Once it gets above 0C, outdoor rinks get mushy unless there is a roof blocking the sun and then you can play up to +10C to +12C. Plus, it can be used in all weather conditions to be utilized every single day from late November to late March. Over \$1M was spent 17 years ago to upgrade this facility and is one of the top two outdoor rinks in the GTA because of that galvanized steel roof. How can an expensive outdoor recreational asset be destroyed after a short life cycle and clearly a poor use of taxpayer funding? Blaming low utilization levels when the rink was closed at 3PM trying to compete with the indoor rink business for rentals is ludicrous. And, of course, this asset was used all four seasons despite the City insisting only used 4 months of the year.

And, the residents do not want to wait 3-5 years to be compensated. They want these rinks before the next election in Fall 2022. Clearly, there was no planning to replace the rink at all. Leaving 750,000 residents with one low quality rink on a tennis court with no boards and no roof at Woodhurst Heights is unacceptable. And telling residents to simply use the 33 volunteer rinks that last about 4 weeks each

Winter is also unacceptable. Furthermore, encouraging hockey fanatics that exist in Southern Ontario, more than any other place on Earth, to go play outdoors on ponds, lakes and rivers with increasing global warming is dangerous recreational strategy.

As I said in my presentation on January 20, 2021, hockey is expensive and blaming immigrants for a lack of league participation to destroy a free outdoor recreational amenity (refrigerated roofed rink with boards and heated change rooms) is punitive. Worse, in Mississauga, hockey will only be for the elite that have the wealth to pay for it. In 20 years time, you will hear some Mississauga residents describe immigrants as people that do not like hockey only because the City removed a quality amenity to try the sport for free like a baseball diamond, soccer field, tennis court or cricket field. If families see their children liking the sport for free outside then at that point they can consider investing money for their child into league play.

So, even though you are rejecting the petition on frivolous and inconsistent grounds, I submit to you all of the comments from people that signed the petition so you can actually hear from residents why they are so upset with the Mayor and City Council.

Of the approximately 400 comments received among over 8200 signatures, about half are from Mississauga residents and here are their comments for your review:

<https://www.change.org/SaveChicMurrayOutdoorCoveredArena>

\* NOTE: Follow link and bottom of page click “***View all reasons for signing***”

I want to thank the Mayor, Councillors, and Recreation Executives for their attention to this matter.

Regards,

Joe Galati