

September 24th

Good morning Mayor Finch and elected councilors,

I had the opportunity to sit in on the reading of the Neustadia rec proposal last night at the council meeting, understanding the need to get some form of alignment for a grant proposal is the priority I viewed a decision that was made hastily with very little discussion about the best for the future community.

I am concerned that the proposal by Neustadia fails to project future growth in user rentals over the next five to ten years (or beyond), and that their projections are based on previous year's usage? Has the municipality or Neustadia collected and presented on the growth in minor hockey registrations and facility usage in the last 4 years (it is actually in the report but was not discussed nor even highlighted) , as Council would have realized that there have been growth by 23% in ice usage by South Huron Minor Hockey Association (SHMHA) and our player membership has grown 27% for the same time period , with further player growth projections in our program to be an additional 22% in the next 2 seasons. Figures that you as Council should seek to confirm with Minor Hockey-one of your largest recreational stakeholders.

Did you also know the main source of "fundraising" for SHMHA is hosting 5 tournaments throughout the season (this lone fact of hosting tournaments is why SHMHA registration fees have not increased in 7 years !!!!) Every time a tournament is held in South Huron currently, outside municipalities receive revenue because there is not capacity to accommodate the business need as it is? This will be exacerbated as we look to add more tournaments as a result of changes by Hockey Canada and the Ontario Women's Hockey Association.

The report (page 45) talks about a "shortage of approximately 23 hours per week easily accommodated at either Hensall or Zurich" I can share with you right now the figure is actually 30 + hours of shortage for SHMHA. We would be forced to source "prime" ice time in another municipality on a long term basis, competing against existing programs in place and meaning our South Huron program \$'s would be spent in another municipality ?

What this "Rec report" and council does not take into consideration with the "easily accommodatedin the Municipality of Bluewater" is that if I am to negotiate 30 + hours at a considerably less expensive hourly rate (sometimes \$40 per hour) with the Municipality of Bluewater and their 2 other facilities in the best interest of SHMHA and keeping our registrations fees the same for maybe 5-7 more years why wouldn't SHMHA shift more of the 1000+ hours currently at SHRC to these "neighbouring facilities" for the good economic health of our organization that is continuing to grow by double digits yearly ?

In closing, it was mentioned during the council meeting by councilor Vaughn to think of future use of the General community spaces in the proposal and "hate to look back and say we should have had more space" I ask that our Mayor, CAO and council look further down the road than 2-3 years and what a true community hub should be able to do/accommodate with the proposed new build housing subdivisions and the continued growth in minor and senior athletic activities and make this project a twin ice pad community hub so that this council SERVES the future needs of South Huron and not a neighbouring municipalities.

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and
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