

Bisera, Leikha

Subject: FW: Deputation for today's meeting re: Use of Ponds by residents

From: Mark Deep

Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 11:22 AM

To: Clerks Public <clerkspublic@markham.ca>

Subject: Deputation for today's meeting re: Use of Ponds by residents

CAUTION: This email originated from a source outside the City of Markham. DO NOT CLICK on any links or attachments, or reply unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please see attached and below. I am unable to attend the meeting but would like this input read and considered by the Mayor and Council. Thank you!

Deputation Statement in Support of Open skating and enjoyment of Milne Pond and the Markham Green Pond (for Town Council Meeting February 23, 2021)

To Markham Council,

This deputation is in full support of the Change.org petition relating to the use of ponds in Markham. I move that the City stop the use of by-law officers, police and security guards to prevent residents from skating and using the ponds at Milne and Markham Green (near Legacy).

The tax-paying residents should be able to use these areas, free from interference since there are several benefits:

- Improved physical and mental health of residents – especially important during the pandemic which restricts what residents can do to stay active
- Improved quality of life and desirability of Markham as a destination for residents and businesses
- Use of the ponds provides ample capacity which allows for safe social distancing and takes the pressure off local rinks such as Legacy Public School (leaving it available and safer for local and younger skaters)
- Skating and hockey are woven into the very fabric of Canadian Society and a national pastime

Instead of preventing residents from enjoying use of these lands, I suggest the Mayor and Council should be looking for ways to support this desire of the tax-payers. This could be achieved by:

- 1) Immediately stopping bylaw officers, police and security guards from preventing residents from using these ponds
- 2) Further communicating to residents that use of the ponds is at their own risk and the City does not maintain them (these signs seem to be in place already)
- 3) Engaging the current residents who are already measuring the thickness of the ice, clearing the rinks and maintaining them. Encourage open communication as to the ice thickness. Consider using existing communication channels to communicate any changes of open/closed. Longer term, perhaps we could use a simple red/green flag system
- 4) Council should consider redeploying existing arena and other staff to help support the outdoor rinks on

ponds. Be creative to find ways to do this within existing budgets and staffing levels to support residents

By next winter, Markham Council should create and implement plans for the City to support skating in Rouge Park on Milne Pond and Markham Green Pond. This would be a great way to improve activity and enjoyment of the land for residents during winters for generations to come. It is also a great way to honour and celebrate the rich history of the area – Milne Dam and the heritage of the area with its rich history dating back to the very founding of Markham. What a great legacy for Mayor and Council to leave to future generations.

Many other municipalities are actively encouraging residents to use their waterways and ponds for skating – high profile examples include Ottawa on the Rideau Canal and nearby Uxbridge.

Please consider this input and work with your residents to increase the enjoyment and health of our Markham community.

“Come, my friends, ‘tis not too late to seek a newer world” - Tennyson

Thank you!

Mark Deep
(Markham resident for over 20 years)

Bisera, Leikha

From: Clerks Public
Subject: FW: Council Meeting topic 2021-02-23 - Skating on ponds

From: Fred Wong
Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 12:23 PM
To: Clerks Public <clerkspublic@markham.ca>
Cc: Gibbons, Michelle
Subject: Council Meeting topic 2021-02-23 - Skating on ponds

CAUTION: This email originated from a source outside the City of Markham. DO NOT CLICK on any links or attachments, or reply unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello, This is a message on behalf of the Grand Cornell pond crew, passionate skaters and hockey players of all ages, the numerous smiling faces simply enjoying the great Canadian winter scene, and a group of dedicated volunteers and new friends understanding the joy of giving and demonstrating great community spirit.

It is simply amazing and has been a wonderful experience for kids of all ages, watching a video of numerous youngsters clearing snow will guarantee to bring a smile to your face too. What more can you ask for?

With proper preparation and safety precautions, all participants agree that the reward greatly outweighs the minimal risks, as there are none in our point of view!

City park inspectors shared the exact same sentiment as we do: No different than swimming at the cottage, what if we live in a Northern Ontario town with a similar setting and a bunch of kids eager to skate and play hockey during the winter? We would learn about ice safety to share and educate everyone, and with a group of parents to never have anyone leaving their line of sight.

More should experience the beauty of Canadian winters. In the past few weeks, with no exception, every single individual who has participated would boast about how beautiful the sight of dozens of kids old and young enjoying themselves. One couple told us just walking around on the pond was the most peaceful hour they have during the pandemic!

So many others are discovering our awesome treasure and are actively helping to maintain the beautiful gem at Grand Cornell.

Shoveling the snow for different areas large enough to safely hold 50 - 60 skaters at a time, with social distancing
Volunteers donating time, energy, generator, sump pump, and expenses in order to flood and maintain the pond
measuring ice thickness
Bring coffee & music, etc.

Everyone contributes with a big smile on their faces, how do you beat that!

We believe education is the key, we've learned safety tips from lifetime pond skaters and from the internet. Please don't waste valuable resources to patrol, instead, perhaps the City of Markham can sponsor a chat room for similar groups to exchange safety and maintenance ideas.

Please Stay safe in everything that you do.
We thank you for your time and considerations