

Markham Skating Club
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February 20, 2006

To Sheila Birrell, Clerk
The Town of Markham:

The Markham Skating Club has been a fixture in the Markham Community for over 40 years. Our focus is to offer a community-based club with strong skill development at an affordable price.

Unfortunately, we have faced many challenges in the past few years. We are now coming out of a difficult period. We were hit by the effects of the double cohort. Most of our senior skaters skate until they leave for university. Instead of having them until Grade 13, we now only have them until Grade 12.

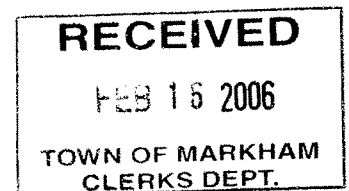
We have worked hard to increase our membership and offer new and innovative ways to fundraise. Just as we started to grow again, we were faced with a \$20/hour or 16% increase in ice rental fees by the Town of Markham. This translates to a \$25,000 increase per year for our fall/winter season alone. It was impossible for us to recover from this increase in one year. To pass this increase directly to our skaters would mean extra fees of \$200 for some skaters. In families with several children, this increase would become too much for them.

Instead of gaining members, passing the full increase on would have resulted in losing them in droves.

In the last few years, our membership has increased. The 2004/05 season saw an increase of 76 skaters. The 2005/06 season has seen an increase of 67 more skaters. We intend to continue this growth. The east Markham area is expanding – especially north of 16th and east of the Ninth Line. We are the closest arena.

Even with this membership growth, the ice rental increase means we are facing a \$15,000 - \$20,000 deficit this season.

We are faced also with sharing the arena with the Library while it faces renovations. Although arena staff and the library have been very accommodating, we are still facing the loss of the boardroom, which we need for our biennial ice show (April 2006). We also need to find extra storage space for the show as our storage facilities in the back of the arena were also taken over by the library.



There is a third issue.

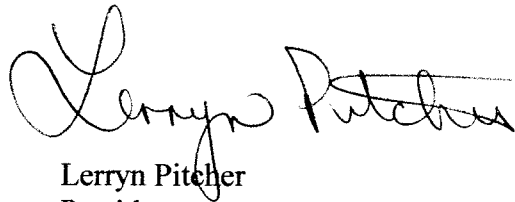
We have looked into other GTA communities and find that Markham is the only one that competes with its skating clubs on such a large scale for learn-to-skate programs. Oakville was in the very same position we are in now and they found it was not working. The Oakville Skating Club took over all the learn-to-skate programs from its town and is now the largest figure skating club in Ontario. Many other municipalities even having figure skating arenas.

We know that learn-to-skate programs run by figure skating clubs are excellent ways to build membership, but the competition from the Town of Markham in this field is becoming increasingly difficult for us.

We would like to make a presentation to the Community Services Committee as soon as possible in order to bring these issues to the attention of Council. We believe that, working together, the Town and the Markham Skating Club can find solutions that benefit each of us and the community as a whole.

Please let me know when a presentation can be scheduled.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lerryn Pitcher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lerryn Pitcher
President
Markham Skating Club

cc- Jim Sales