

November 23, 2009

TO: City Council
FROM: Mayor David Miller
RE: Girls Hockey in City-owned Arenas

I have received a complaint from Toronto Leaside Girls Hockey Association that the City has not adequately nor equitably accommodated girls hockey in the same way as boys hockey, particularly in specific arenas managed by arena boards of management. I have also received numerous letters and emails from Toronto residents expressing concern about a lack of equitable access to city-owned arenas for all users.

The City has received a petition signed by over 2,000 residents requesting that the City provide equitable ice allocation in all City-owned arenas for the 2010/2011 season. I have also received a letter from Leaside Community Gardens Memorial Arena Board of Management identifying the shortage of ice rinks as the major cause of this problem.

Equitable access to City services is a fundamental tenet of municipal government and it is incumbent on each member of City Council to do all we can to ensure that these basic principles and policies are adhered to regardless of management model and geographic area of the City. We need to demonstrate to communities that we have the ability to deal with such issues swiftly and decisively. I have been assured by City staff that the City's ice allocation policy is working well in directly-operated arenas with improvements being made continuously over several years. Ice allocation is usually negotiated in the first quarter of the year for the following winter season. It is therefore important that we are able to gather information from board-operated arenas now to determine whether further improvements are needed and take action immediately to rectify any situations where equitable allocation is found to be an issue. Our objective should be to accommodate house leagues locally and to achieve equity City-wide, which does not necessarily mean at every location individually.

It is understood that there are a number of issues that are inextricably bound together. The shortage of ice availability is a major factor. Proposals for a second pad at Leaside Gardens and 4 pads in the Waterfront have been developed. The City should do all it can to make these initiatives come to fruition. In addition, the issue is linked to fee structures and the objective for downtown arenas to be financially self-sufficient and there are long standing associations with user groups that need to be respected.

I asked Councillor Janet Davis as Chair of the City's Community Development and Recreation Committee to recommend the actions necessary immediately to deal with this issue. I recommend adoption of her thoughtful recommendations attached.

Yours truly,

Mayor David Miller



**Janet
DAVIS**

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November 23, 2009

To: Mayor David Miller

RE: Equitable Ice Time Allocation in City-owned Arenas

Dear Mayor Miller,

The City of Toronto through its Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) division directly operates 40 arenas with 48 ice pads. In addition, there are eight City-owned arenas that are operated by arena boards of management. Governance of these board-operated arena facilities is through a relationship framework agreement, approved by Council in 2007.

At City-operated arenas ice is allocated consistently through a Council-approved allocation policy, which speaks to equitable distribution. In addition, PFR's practices in allocating ice to girls' and women's hockey provides first consideration for these groups whenever ice time becomes available. Hockey groups serving girls and women have worked directly with PFR permitting staff in a consultative manner to identify needs for ice time and to continually increase access – which has continued to grow at City-operated arenas since 2003. As a result of the City's principle-based policy statement and its equitable operational practices, at City-operated arenas girls and boys have very close to their proportionate share of ice, based on current participation levels.

While city-operated arenas follow consistent and Council-approved policies and procedures to allocate ice equitably, each of the eight board-operated arenas function independently at arms-length from the City. Boards follow their own policies and procedures, develop their own business models, allocate their own ice time and set their own fees for ice.

In order to more fully understand how ice is being allocated and to whom at board-operated facilities, data on usage and allocation is required. This information has been previously requested by City staff. While some data was received in response, information was incomplete and in some cases further confirmation is required to verify the data.

Further, while article 2.1 section A of the Relationship Framework stipulates that the boards shall provide safe, full and equitable access to high quality indoor ice, more consistent practices and strategies and plans are needed to ensure a fair approach to ice allocation. An understanding of how these changes will impact the boards' business models is also required, as is a review of the Relationship Framework Agreement.

In preparing these recommendations, I have consulted with the General Manager of Parks, Forestry, and Recreation and her staff and the City Manager and his staff. I believe they represent a fair and effective approach to addressing this matter.

I therefore recommend that:

1. The City Manager request all Arena Boards of Management to provide to Parks Forestry and Recreation staff all information requested on the allocation of ice time immediately, as per Article 8.2.1 of the Relationship Framework;
2. The Arena Boards of Management be directed to develop their proposed 2010/2011 ice time allocations in consultation with the General Manager of Parks, Forestry, and Recreation and in a manner consistent with the City's Ice Allocation Policy, such that girls' house leagues receive their proportionate share of house league's prime time ice;
3. The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation work with the Arena Boards to allocate ice time for girls competitive leagues to maximize opportunities for leagues to play in their home areas;
4. The Arena Boards of Management be directed to submit their full ice allocation plan for 2010/2011 to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry, and Recreation for approval prior to implementation;
5. The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in cooperation with the City Manager's Office, report to the Community Development and Recreation Committee in early 2010 on progress to date and any further recommendations to ensure that the Arena Boards' policies and practices are consistent with the City's Ice Allocation Policy and practices, such a report to include any cost implications that may need to be considered.
6. The City Manager report to the Executive Committee on any necessary changes to the relationship framework for arena boards to achieve equitable access to ice time in City-owned arenas;
7. The General Manager of Parks, Forestry, and Recreation report on the progress for building the second pad at Leaside Gardens; and
8. The General Manager of Parks Forestry and Recreation review the City Ice Allocation Policy and the Harmonized Permit Allocation Policy and Permit Rates Framework as part of the development of the Recreation Service Plan, with the goal of achieving greater equity of access to recreation programs and facilities for girls and other under-represented groups, and making improvements to the delivery of hockey programs in the City of Toronto.

Sincerely,

Janet Davis
Chair, Community Development and Recreation Committee