

Submitted by TE24.83.21  
Councillor Mark Grimes



June 6, 2013

Councillor Mark Grimes  
Toronto City Hall  
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Councillor Grimes:

I am writing to you today regarding the June 11<sup>th</sup> motion requesting to designate the University of Toronto (U of T)'s Back Campus Playing Fields as a cultural heritage landscape.

As the leader of Canada's Olympic Movement, I would like to inform you that I am in favour of the U of T's plans to expand access to sport and recreation opportunities on its downtown campus. A vote to turn this land into a cultural heritage landscape would jeopardize the University from hosting several 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games events, including the Pan Am field hockey and Parapan Am soccer tournaments - all of which will have a lasting impact on future generations of athletes and sports infrastructure in Toronto.

I urge you to vote against this request for three main reasons.

To begin, this motion comes more than four years after City Council agreed to seek the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games and more than one year after the University's Governing Council overwhelmingly approved the project.

As you know, U of T has made an agreement with the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games to upgrade the Back Campus Fields with synthetic turf to improve playing time, quality of play and player safety for all levels of sport and recreation. Long after the Games are over, the new fields will significantly enhance sport and physical activity at U of T and within the downtown core, while maintaining the traditional heritage setting surrounded by the existing trees and natural grass perimeter.

Secondly, the landscape of the U of T grounds will remain the same. No tree will be cut down; no biocides will be sprayed; no permanent stands will be constructed; no inflatable domes will be erected; and no new fencing will impact the view of the historic buildings that surround the current site.

In fact, keeping the grounds in the unsafe and muddled state that it currently operates in is harmful to not only to athletes, but to the overall integrity of the neighbourhood, the University community and the entire City of Toronto.



Lastly, the City of Toronto has such a rich history with Canada's Olympic Movement. There are 58,000 students on the St. George campus, including many exceptional athletes who require the adequate facilities to continue their quest for athletic success. These athletes and the entire sport community in the region need an increase - not limited - access to more best-in-class facilities such as the one being built for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games.

The current fields are in serious disrepair and have been for some time. The use of the space is very limited in most seasons and waiting lists for access are long. Student and community demand for sport and recreation spaces grows every year, and this project is a key solution to this challenge.

The new fields meet stringent international sport federation standards and will be one of the only venues in the area of its kind able to host top international competition for this fast growing sport. It is important to note that field hockey is a sport that attracts a diverse group of fans and athletes from all over the world. With the diverse communities of Toronto, this is an ideal location for such a facility.

Voting for this motion would be a disservice to the University community and ultimately, it would be an obstruction to the building of Toronto's sports legacy.

It is my sincere hope the City supports this important initiative to keep students and community members engaged in healthy physical activity and sport. You, as a councillor, have an opportunity to impact the state of sport in Toronto and in Canada for generations to come.

Once again, I implore you to vote against this motion.

Yours in sport,

Marcel Aubut  
President, Canadian Olympic Committee