

Letter Re: North Toronto Arena

We have reviewed the Public Meeting #1 Summary and wish to point out certain errors or inaccuracies in it. We realize that the Summary merely reflects comments made at the meeting, but we hope that, before future reports or summaries are issued, facts will be verified before they are published or otherwise made public. You or your colleagues may contact me at any time to verify information before it is published.

I refer you to the heading "Related to organized sport" on page 9 of the Summary where the following statements are made:

"Hockey is controlled by the GTHL-so there's no longer a community hockey team because they couldn't get ice time in their own rink."

"Programming is controlled by outside groups."

The above two statements are patently incorrect. The North Toronto Hockey Association (NTHA), which operates the largest house league in Toronto, as well as Select, Single A and Double A teams, is the prime hockey user in our Arena. The NTHA is a North Toronto community based organization that is operated by volunteers who live in North Toronto. Virtually all of the players live in North Toronto, including players on the GTHL (A and AA) teams. The House League uses most of our prime time ice on weekends, and the GTHL games that are played in our Arena must include a NTHA team in all games. Similarly, a small portion of our prime time ice is rented to the North York Hockey League (NYHL) for Select games. As with the GTHL, one of the teams in each NYHL Select game must be a NTHA team. As a result, NTHA teams play in all GTHL and NYHL games at our Arena and the balance of the hockey is House League. Our Arena probably provides more ice to local organizations than any other arena in Toronto. No outside groups are involved.

Of the 62 hours of Prime Time ice at North Toronto Arena 59-1/2 hours or 96% is used for Community Programs either North Toronto Hockey Association for hockey skills and games or by the North Toronto Skating Club for learn to skate and figure skating lessons.

The North Toronto Skating Club is a major user of Prime Time ice at our Arena. Like the NTHA, the Skating Club is a North Toronto organization that is operated by North Toronto residents for North Toronto residents. I received an email from the Skating Club that deals with the Summary, and it is set out below.

In response to the Public Meeting notes from the Midtown in Focus groups, the North Toronto Skating Club comments are as follows:

NTSC is one of the long term fundamental groups which has been a part of the NT Arena Community for nearly 50 years. Our programming has always met the needs of the community and the arena manager and volunteer Board of Directors have always been attentive to helping the NTSC continue to be the strong neighbourhood club that it is today.

Having the parking lot adjacent and on grade has always been a positive factor in making our program accessible and welcoming and added to the participation level of families with skaters of all ages.

Losing easy access to the NTSC programming by putting the parking underground could send large numbers of our membership to nearby skating clubs which maintain adjacent, on-grade parking including Leaside and Forest Hill. Our skating population includes parents (many rushing from work), caregivers, and grandparents who arrive at the rink with young skaters from the age of 2+ with skates, helmets and snowsuits. Often they have babies and other children in tow and require several trips from the car to the dressing room to get the skaters ready for their lessons.

Our club hosts test days whereby judges come to evaluate our skaters' skills. Having nearby parking is a big plus for our club in asking Skate Canada judges to attend our test days. Without adjacent and on-grade parking NTSC will have a difficult time getting these experienced and mostly older officials of our sport to come to North Toronto.

Note also that the "arena" parking lot also serves the seasonal outdoor ice surface, the Second Mile club, the sporting field, especially soccer, and the playground. Putting the parking underground will only make the street parking issue around the park more of a problem.

There is no doubt that the arena entrance from Orchard View could be improved with clearer sightlines and re-paving. Making sure there is a good pathway for pedestrians into the park and arena along the driveway should be a priority.

Access to the arena lot from Eglinton, if it is even feasible (keeping the existing structures and fire route requirements in mind) may only serve to bring strangers wandering into the facility and will also bring the general public (not skaters or park-users) looking for a place to park their car. The arena has always been a safe place for our community children to be (some spend 6-7 hours there weekly) as it is inside the community and not a place where people drop or stop in casually. Adding access from Eglinton may make our arena less safe for our children.

North Toronto Skating Club welcomes the opportunity to participate further in the process to improve our community.

Janice Mitchell
NTSC Representative - North Toronto Arena Board of Directors.