



Wallaceburg Minor Hockey Association

September 9, 2020

Wallaceburg Councillor Aaron Hall and Councillor Carmen McGregor

Wallaceburg Minor Hockey Association (WMHA) has been an active part of the community supporting young athletes and families for over 70 years. In recent years we have enjoyed a significant revitalization with increased registrations due in large part to the hard work and dedication of our board, volunteers, coaches, players, and families! We work hard to engage in our community with our annual Mark Weese Memorial Jamboree, and our Frank Dymock Memorial Tournament. In the last two seasons we have hosted large, successful community events including our Toronto Maple Leaf's Alumni game and our Play4Brae Charity day. To further highlight recent success our Lakers are the reigning OMHA Midget B Champions – a 2019 playoff run which attracted thousands of spectators to our arena - and prior to the Covid19 cancelation of the season we had one of the top Midget BB Girls teams in Ontario. The volunteerism, the dedication, the community engagement, and the success we have had has helped to raise the profile of our association. Furthermore, our momentum has attracted new players, helped to keep players, and helped to develop players. All of these are a positive reflection on the community! We are proud to be Lakers and we are proud to play at Wallaceburg Memorial Arena!

Amid turbulent and uncertain times, WMHA has voted to submit our ice commitment to the municipality with 100% commitment of our 300+ players to play at Wallaceburg Memorial Arena. We feel very strongly that opening Wallaceburg Memorial Arena (under necessary Covid19 safety guidelines) is important for the health, wellbeing and development of our players and is of critical importance to the long-term sustainability of our association. Should the arena in Wallaceburg remain closed and players be asked to travel to a neighbouring town in Chatham-Kent or elsewhere we fear our registrations would fall significantly to a level of unsustainability. We compete year in and year out to maintain our registration numbers. To lose players poses significant risk to lose them for the duration of their minor hockey career. This has the potential to negatively impact us this year and in future years which in turn, will undoubtedly reduce ice rentals Wallaceburg for years to come.

We feel the long-term success of WMHA and Wallaceburg Memorial Arena hinges on a timely opening of the facility. Re-opening the arena allows for use of a multi-million dollar upgraded facility with 8 change rooms allowing for optimizing COVID19 protocols for physical distancing. Re-opening our arena allows us to continue to grow and develop our association. Re-opening our arena sends a clear message to the people of the community that Wallaceburg is an integral piece of the CK fabric, much like Blenheim, Dresden and Tilbury, where arenas are open. We need and expect similar cooperation from our local facility

Further to the benefit the immediate re-opening of our arena will have for Minor Hockey Players, there will be many other groups and activities that will also benefit. Including Figure Skating, Recreational Hockey, Development programs, etc. The Wallaceburg Memorial Arena is by far one of the most utilized



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facilities in Chatham-Kent, and certainly in Wallaceburg. In an article containing a recent interview with Jeff Bray , CK's Manager, Parks and Open Spaces / Recreational Facilities it was reported that "Almost all of Chatham-Kent's minor ice organizations have seen drastic declines in registration since 2014, with the exception of Dresden and Wallaceburg, who have both seen significant increases." Hundreds of Wallaceburg area residents have expressed concern to our association and are counting on your support.

We as the facility's single largest tenant are asking you, our Wallaceburg councillors to table a motion to re-open Wallaceburg Memorial Arena and install ice for use no later than September 28, 2020. We need to make a commitment to our membership in order to keep our association alive and give our community the facility they have earned.

Respectfully

Shane Fraleigh

WMHA President

And Associated Board Members

References: CKSN <http://www.cksn.ca/2019/01/arena-usage-falling-fast-chatham-kent/>