



Tuesday, August 12, 2025

Town Clerk

Township of Brock

1 Cameron Street East

Cannington, ON LoE 1E0

Members of Council,

RE: Request for Council Consideration – September Ice Access and Shared Facility Use During Fall Fairs

On behalf of the Brock Minor Hockey Association (BMHA), I am requesting that Council approve our previous request for ice installation in our local arenas beginning in late August, ensuring ice is available for all user groups so their seasons can start immediately following Labour Day each year. We are asking for this change to take effect with Beaverton Arena in September 2026, and Sunderland Arena as soon as it is recommissioned. It is time to take action to resolve a long-standing facility access challenge during the month of September.

Recent changes at the provincial level have increased the urgency of this matter. The Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) has moved the official start of the hockey season into August, with many teams now permitted to begin development programming the week prior to Labour Day weekend. Additionally, the Victoria Durham Hockey League—in which BMHA teams compete—has advanced the start of its regular season games from the Monday following Thanksgiving to September 29th. These changes significantly compress the time available for BMHA to complete team tryouts, organize sort skates, and meet mandated development skate requirements set by OMHA and Hockey Canada before games begin.

Meanwhile, Brock Township remains one of the few municipalities in Ontario where ice is not available until the final week of September—or, for this season, early October due to the Sunderland renovation—leaving our association and families at a significant competitive disadvantage. This disadvantage is further amplified by the OMHA's open borders policy, which allows families to register with any association, including neighbouring towns where ice is reliably available in early September—in most cases, the week following Labour Day. In this context, our inability to secure timely access to ice is no longer just an inconvenience—it poses a threat to the long-term health and sustainability of BMHA as an organization.

It's important to clarify that our previous requests for "early ice" are only early relative to what we've traditionally been given. Across the province, an early September start or in most cases earlier, is the standard. We are simply seeking equal footing for our players and all other ice users in our community.

The success of this spring's "late ice" pilot program—which was announced on social media and by local news outlets to have generated a surplus of over \$14,000—demonstrated that creative, shared use of our municipal arenas is not only feasible but financially beneficial. It helps offset operating costs and makes better use of these taxpayer-funded assets.¹

¹ <https://www.thestandardnewspaper.ca/post/beaverton-arena-ice-extension-deemed-a-success-set-to-return-in-2026>



Currently, during September, the Township continues to incur operating costs at the facilities while generating little to no revenue—not only from missed ice bookings, but also because the fairs and other organizations using the facilities during this time are not charged for their use. At a recent meeting, the Beaverton Fair Board suggested that providing BMHA with September ice would be irresponsible to taxpayers, based on their assumption that warm-weather operating costs would outweigh the revenue from ice rentals. The spring ice pilot has already proven this assumption to be unfounded—and that was at a time when the hockey “season” was essentially over and user group interest is lower than normal.

September, by contrast, marks the start of a new season, when excitement and demand for ice are at their highest. We believe demand would far exceed what was seen during the spring ice pilot. BMHA alone is prepared to commit our full regular-season programming hours each week as a minimum for September ice, and would likely require additional hours to accommodate fall tryouts (for second rep and select teams), evaluation skates, and pre-skates that must take place beforehand. On paper, our September ice needs regularly surpass those of the regular season, yet we have never been able to meet them due to the lack of available ice in Brock. Each year we fall short despite our best efforts to secure ice in surrounding municipalities—from Stouffville and Georgina in the west, to Lindsay, Woodville, and Little Britain in the east, Port Perry and Uxbridge in the south, and Fenelon Falls in the north. These communities prioritize their own residents and associations first, leaving us with only whatever ice remains—and that amount is never enough. Arenas are far from empty at this time of year; the available ice is simply spoken for before we can access it.

Furthermore, BMHA recognizes that if warm-weather operating costs were ever to become prohibitive, it would be reasonable to adjust our rental rates to offset those costs. Our rates are currently below those of surrounding municipalities, and we would expect and accept a reasonable increase—provided it is communicated to us no later than the end of January of each Calendar year—so that any changes can be incorporated into our seasonal registration fees.

We recognize and respect the agricultural roots of our community and the importance of the fall fairs, and we are not asking to interfere with their operations, change their dates, or require events to run concurrently. Our proposal is simply to install ice in late August so that the rinks in Beaverton and Sunderland are ready for use by the Tuesday after Labour Day. During the fairs themselves—typically two to three days—we are fully prepared to pause our programming and work collaboratively to minimize any disruption. In fact, we see potential to integrate hockey into the fairs through demonstrations, exhibition games, or other activities that could help draw additional traffic, while ensuring our needs are met and the long-term viability of our programs is maintained. We are happy to support in any way the fairs deem appropriate.

We also understand this may require the fairs to relocate certain events, displays, or booths that are traditionally set up on the arena floor. While it would be up to the Fair Boards to determine the most suitable alternative space, BMHA is open to discussing a reasonable financial contribution toward the cost of a tent or shelter that would allow these activities to continue outdoors, protected from the weather.

Alternatively, if the Township were willing to explore an insulated flooring system that could be installed over the ice—protecting and preserving it while allowing the surface to function as a floor—we would be prepared to discuss contributing toward that cost as well, provided the pricing was within our means.



To be clear, we cannot commit to covering the full cost or any fixed percentage in advance, but we are willing to consider an appropriate contribution once a solution and associated costs are defined, and have already started setting aside funds for this initiative. We also believe it would be appropriate for the Township to explore supporting such an investment, given that the additional rental revenue would place the facilities in a stronger financial position to do so.

Over the past year, we have made a concerted effort to share our commitments and explore a shared-use solution with the Beaverton Fair Board, but those discussions have not yet produced a workable outcome. No discussions have taken place with the Sunderland Fair Board to date. We recognize that any change of this nature must be led by the Township, working collaboratively with all stakeholders to coordinate the details. A workable model is within reach and ready to be developed—but it will require Township leadership to set the direction and make the commitment to install ice prior to the fairs. Doing so would not only be the equitable choice for youth sports—it would also be the financially responsible decision for Township taxpayers.

This request is not about pitting one community group against another—it's about modernizing our approach to arena use to reflect the full and current needs of our residents. With some collaboration and flexibility, we believe we can support both the fall fairs and our youth athletes without compromise.

We respectfully ask that this matter be brought forward for Council's consideration. I plan to attend the next sitting of Council on September 8 to speak as a deputation on this matter, if approved.

Thank you for your time and for your ongoing commitment to our community. BMHA remains ready to work with the Township and Fair Boards to build a model that works for everyone.

Sincerely,

Matt Gross
President
Brock Minor Hockey Association