

Councillor Janet Davis,  
Chair, Community Development and Recreation Committee  
City Hall, Toronto.

Jan.25, 2009

Dear Councillor Davis,

I am writing to request a meeting with you regarding the City's outdoor compressor-cooled ice rinks.

As you may be aware, our group has been monitoring outdoor rinks closely for some years, and we have published a number of reports about them, as well as documenting them on our *cityrinks.ca* website.

We are very concerned about the future of these rinks. Our concerns include:

1. *The reclassification of 10 of the 11 central-Toronto single-pad outdoor rinks as "minor."* This seems to have resulted in very similar facilities being treated very differently. In Etobicoke and North York, such rinks (9 of them) have full-time maintenance staff with two shifts daily, yet in central-Toronto they get at most two maintenance visits a day, often only one, and occasionally none at all. This is hardly the "harmonization" of approach the City aims for.
2. *The enormous variation in public access between rinks that have the same public funding,* ranging from a high of 80 hours a week in central-Toronto to a low of 12 hours a week in North York (i.e. public rink usage inverse to their staffing). The public access restrictions appear to be linked more to staff culture than to a gain in permit revenue.
3. *The setting of unrealistic, quite alarming revenue targets for outdoor rinks.* After many months of trying, our group recently obtained the internal Parks, Forestry and Recreation PROGRAM REVIEW- FULL COSTING AND PRICING STUDY. This staff report recommends increasing permit fees and scheduling prime time rental of outdoor rinks to make over \$800 a day, calling for this approach to be "phased in over a number of years." Trying for such an impossible target is a very damaging direction for the outdoor rinks.

Our group has considerable hands-on knowledge of what helps outdoor compressor-cooled rinks to work well. We believe that Toronto's forty-nine outdoor ice rinks are among the city's treasures, and they need a change in approach. May we discuss our concerns with you, and our suggestions for magnifying the outdoor rinks' potential? A meeting with you within the next two weeks, preferably before your February *Community Development and Recreation Committee* meeting, would be ideal.

Jutta Mason

