

Dear Committee Members,

I am sorry that I couldn't be here to speak on the issues in person.

I have read the staff report and it is obvious that a serious rebuttal has been made to the proposals that the Arena Association put forward. In deliberating on the issues, I want the Committee to know that the proposals put forward were not designed to benefit the Arena Association. The proposals, if adopted, will work slowly to make the costing for various city programs fairer. I know the City is working with organizations in an effort to standardize accounting and reporting. RACA's proposals are consistent with this initiative.

It seems the City's accounting for programs is not consistent. If an asset is funded through an acquisition, then there is no cost to the operating program, if the asset is leased then there is a charge. How can programs ever be comparable when a financing decision impacts the operating budget? Who gets the capital contribution and who gets stuck with the lease? These are not easy issues to resolve. But to users of different facilities, the financing decision the City makes, apparently does make an impact. Our effort is aimed at minimizing the impact of these types of decisions.

Freezing or limiting the growth of the fee that RACA pays the City will allow RACA to pass on the savings to the minor sports groups and make ice and arena sports slightly less expensive than they otherwise would be. We believe that arena users are paying more than their fair share. This proposal is designed to ensure that the City PRCS programs are funded fairly by the City taxpayers. Might the City consider using its resources to ensure that arena programs are affordable and then make up the shortfall in other areas where users pay little, or nothing. There is substantial support in the community for arena programs.

Although, the two issues before you are very specific, I ask that they be viewed in a broader context of fairness. In closing, I leave you with the following observation: The land that the Richmond Ice Centre is situated on is leased and that cost is being charged to the Arenas budget. There is no similar charge in the fields budget for the land at Hugh Boyd on which the soccer and football fields have been built. What is being done to eliminate the accounting inequity?

Thank you for your consideration.

Frank Claassen