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Clarksburg, Ontario
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April 20, 2022

Ryan Gibbons, Director of Community Services
Town of Blue Mountains

Dear Mr. Gibbons,

It has come to my attention that the current policy of having tennis courts in our community openly available is going to end. I feel that this decision needs to have more input from various perspectives and that a more fair equitable solution be achieved.

Are you certain that this proposed change will be in keeping with your mission and vision to adhere to the tenets of:

EXCELLENCE: Providing conscientious service to the community and to each other;

INTEGRITY: Being honest, consistent, and fair in all we do;

ACCOUNTABILITY: Ensuring responsible and transparent governance;

INCLUSIVITY: Respecting and engaging every voice ?

Tennis is an inclusive sport. People of every age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and athletic ability (or difference) are able to play some variation of this activity. Shouldn't your mandate be to INCREASE the number of people who participate in this wonderful activity rather than to deter people? Imagine this scenario: A family of 4 arrives at a local court and sees that it is available at the top of the hour. They proceed to get started playing. Just a few minutes later, a group of four people arrive and claim that they have paid to use the court. Don't you see how this will cause conflict and frustration? Imagine the interaction that will ensue! In this situation, some people could become aggressive, others will be proactive and look for a loophole. work Some will roll with it, and others will just give up and decide not to bother at all!

As taxpayers, we are already contributing to the maintenance of parks in our community. Why can't a tennis court be considered in the same light as playground equipment? Yes, both require some maintenance and therefore labour on the part of municipal workers. However, you wouldn't charge families to come and enjoy the playground equipment, would you?

If the Town of Blue Mountains is looking for a way to generate more income, why not consider some kind of a tag system whereby those who wish to participate in tennis need to

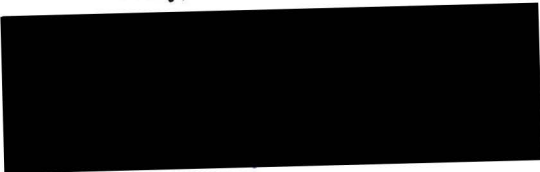
purchase a tag to say that they have contributed. Maybe a sticker could be added to the parking passes that we already get to use as members of the community? Although I don't feel that is necessary because that practice would also NOT be inclusive, I feel that it would be a much better compromise. Someone who truly loves the game of tennis might want to play twice a day. Let's say they manage to get to the courts seven times a week and the season runs for 25 weeks. Do you really think it's FAIR to have someone pay almost \$2,000 to do something they LOVE, which they've always done either for FREE (in the case of visitors to the community) or through the taxes they pay already? Why should the people who are able and/OR willing to pay, have their rights override those who are not? Yes, in order to participate in various other sports like golf, people have to pay. There is a significant cost to keeping up golf greens. Tennis is one of the last few pleasures in life that requires minimal cost! What's next? Will you charge us to walk on the trails?

Perhaps I've got this all wrong. Is the purpose of this dramatic change to make it easier for people who aren't willing to just show up and take a chance on getting a court? Going back to my example of one group starting to play and another showing up a few minutes late and then trying to kick them off the court. How can that NOT cause disharmony? Tennis players can "police" themselves! We don't need a system to "control" things. I have never seen a situation in which there has been a time when people can't work things out in a civil manner. People know how to do the right thing and share the court time. In fact, this can be how new connections are made. In my personal experience, I have met many people by having others either invite me to join them in a game or ask if they could join me. It just works the way it is!

I urge you to change your policy to charge people to "rent" the courts. If you follow the model of baseball teams, for example, you could charge a nominal fee to a club. Baseball diamonds are open and available for families to walk on and enjoy learning the skills of baseball when not in use by local teams. The Town of Blue Mountains could also continue to insist that clubs and groups don't monopolize the time on the courts so that non-members can also enjoy this inclusive sport.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding my suggestions.

Sincerely,



Marie Swift