

April 16, 2025

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to object both to the apparent selection of 130 King West as the future site of indoor tennis “for South Georgian Bay” and the hasty process being followed to facilitate this. I would also urge the Town to abide by the recommendations of Ryan Gibbons on April 7 to conduct a comprehensive review of all suitable Town sites as Georgian Bay Racquet Initiative (GBRI) stated that they were amenable to all recommendations.

First, let’s be clear on what GBRI is proposing. It is not a couple more tennis courts but a “hub” a place to socialize; a racquet facility not for The Town of Blue Mountains but for Georgian Bay. They would like to provide a facility for competitive sport, coaching and tournament play. This is more akin to the private ski clubs than a community recreational space. For further reference I would urge Council to look at GBRI's website to see for themselves what they have in mind.

https://georgianbayracquets.ca/?utm_source=collingwoodtoday.ca&utm_campaign=collingwoodtoday.ca%3A%20outbound&utm_medium=referral

While 130 King West currently has two outdoor courts, it is wholly unsuitable for a racquet-plex on multiple grounds, foremost that it is in the middle of a residential neighbourhood. At one time this lot may have been on the Town’s outskirts but it is no longer the case. A community surrounds this plot which is the sole surviving green space adjacent to sensitive land bordering a salmon-spawning river. The long awaited paving of Peel street does not afford street parking. The creation of six courts and a parking lot would require the clear cutting and destruction of this beautiful site. I would like to suggest that the Town stick to its original plan and evaluate alternate suitable locations. I would suggest Tomahawk that is flat cleared land and already has other sports facilities and ample parking to accommodate tennis bubbles.

Re: the Process

The Staff Report prepared by Ryan Gibbons on April 7, states that a comprehensive review is to be conducted on all suitable Town sites. Yet the Town has launched a survey in which the sole property being considered is 150 King West. This is a contravention of its own directive to review alternate sites. Why the sudden rush to build a facility on this plot without any review of alternate sites? Why are there no photographs of what is being proposed for this site along with those of the current state?

The Town has also made this a public process, so everyone may participate. The public at large is already being asked to opine on what gets built on this Town site, yet those of us who live here and pay taxes are not yet required to participate? Isn’t the Town's first Strategic Priority Communication and Engagement? While GBRI has clearly made itself a stakeholder, I do not see how the general public is a stakeholder in a sports facility intended for our community.

Furthermore, GBRI’s forceful campaign, petitioning and Response Guide with “handy ideas and screenshots to help you navigate the The Town of Blue Mountains” survey, is misleading, offensive and manipulative with its “suggested feedback”.

I strongly object to the way in which Council has bowed to the vigorous petitioning of a special interest group, and failed to follow the recommendations of its staff to seek guidance on the selection of a suitable site. 130 King is a beautiful plot with natural beauty and would be a welcome addition as parkland, including the existing courts much like Bayview Park. Surely, more suitable space could be found to accommodate indoor courts, parking and competitive sport.

Sincerely,

Svetla Los
Thornbury