

FAX TO:
Legislative Counsel Office /Law Amendments Committee
Fax no. 424 0547

FROM:
Molly De Shong, citizen of HRM
December 4, 2012
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Concerning Bill 157: An act to amend the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter to permit the erection by the Municipality of a permanent building on the North Common of Halifax in support of the Oval

To members of government, council, and committee:

I wish to register my opposition to the city's proposal to build a *permanent* structure on the Halifax Common Park. I urge you to consider the opinion of myself (and many others) who frequently use and appreciate the wide-open, beautiful space that is our Halifax Common.

I hope you will consider the following points:

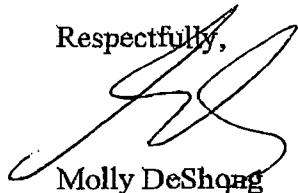
1. The Halifax Common park was given to the city to be protected as open space. Less than 20% of the entire common remains as public open space. Permanent structures contravene the spirit of the original agreement to preserve the park, and debase the beauty of this open, spacious land.
2. I am *not against* having bathrooms and storage structures on the Common while the skating season is on – that would be ridiculous. I simply do not see the logic of creating *permanent* structures. Skating is a seasonal activity; no other sport in the history of the Common has required a permanent structure to store anything, from baseball to horse racing to car racing.
3. The 1994 Halifax Common Plan stated there be no more buildings constructed. If we allow this one to be built, what other buildings will follow? What assurance do we have that further buildings will not be built after this initial one proposed? Once such plans begin, others tend to follow...it can be hard for governing bodies to recall or revert back to earlier wishes and criteria.
4. The public process has been questionable concerning whether / where to locate the Oval on the Common, and whether/where to place structures. Friends of the Halifax Common (FHC) made presentations to Community Council, the mayor, councillors and staff to suggest that there might be a better location for the Oval. If the Oval was on the Central Common, the wasted heat (enough for 150 homes) could be recaptured and heat Citadel High, the hospitals, or the Nova Scotia Museum. If it was located on the

Wanderers Grounds, there would be better shelter and adjacency to the Parks & Grounds depot for support staff and equipment.

5. FHC has proposed alternative shelters such as the international design competition that Winnipeg has each year for temporary warming huts (see <http://www.warminghuts.com/gallery>). Ottawa has temporary facilities for winter skating.

I urge you to consider *temporary* structures on the Common instead of permanent ones—to preserve one of the only remaining wide-open spaces in the middle of our city. Also, please *do* continue to invite public input with respect to the appearance and use of our public parks.

Respectfully,



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