



December 3, 2012

Honourable Ross Landry, Chair
Law Amendments Committee
Nova Scotia Legislative Counsel
P. O. Box 1116
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Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

My name is Todd Landon. I work for the Canadian Sport Centre Atlantic and Speed Skating Canada as a Long Track Coach and Regional Development Mentor. I am here to speak in support of Bill 157 to amend the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter to allow the erection of a permanent building on the North Common to support the Oval.

I first experienced the Oval as the Long Track Coach for Team Manitoba at the 2011 Canada Winter Games. Leading up to the Games we were impressed with the news about the popularity of the Oval. At the Games we were overwhelmed by the number of people who came out to watch the Long Track Speed Skating Events. Then after the Games it was fantastic to hear about the efforts being made to save the oval.

Once the decision to save the Oval was made the Canadian Sport Centre Atlantic and Speed Skating Canada each saw the value of having someone in a position locally to develop the sport around the Oval. The role of the position is to develop and support coaches and athletes in the Atlantic. The benefit of the Oval, in Speed Skating terms, will be the ability to develop Atlantic athletes towards podium performances at national and onto international events. Speed Skating also sees the Oval as a venue to host local, regional, national, and even international events.

However, aside from Speed Skating's objective to develop speed skating athletes the Oval plays a bigger role in promoting physical activity within the general public. The Oval's benefit has been its ability to draw in and offer the public an accessible physical recreation activity. During the skating season the ability to draw in and offer recreational skating is aided by the ability for anybody to participate and have access the required equipment on site. Access to free ice, and free skates and the required safety equipment at the Halifax Oval is unique in Canada. Imagine the recreational and health impact of having other sports' equipment available on site to use at the Oval during other seasons.

The Oval can be more than just a winter activity venue. Without restating the recognized statistics on the status of the population's health and its correlation to physical activity it is important for the Oval to become a year round recreation venue. Also without speaking on behalf of other sport and recreation organizations there could be several other uses for the Oval in the spring, summer, and fall. Some of those activities could include inline skating, basketball, disk sports, mini-golf, etc.

A permanent building on the Oval site could also be used as a depot for equipment for recreation on the Oval or the rest of the North Common throughout the year and not just the

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skating season. Then rather than have unsightly temporary buildings brought in from time to time a permanent building can be designed to best suit the aesthetic of the North Common.

A permanent building on the Oval site will make the Halifax Oval an attractive site for organizations to host events. The very design of the Oval makes it a focal point for skate racing events and Speed Skating competitions. The Halifax Oval not only host local and regional events but also national and international events. The possibility of national and international events being awarded to Halifax will be strengthened by having a permanent facility on site.

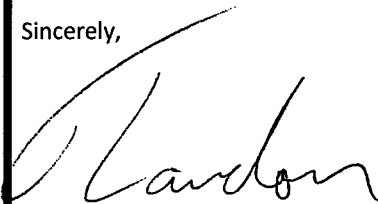
Over the past year I have encountered several skaters from across the country who have inquired about when will they be able to compete in Halifax. The skaters either experienced Halifax during the Canada Winter Games or heard about those experiences and look forward to return. To aid in promoting and organizing skate racing events on the Oval Speed Skating Nova Scotia has formed a Skate Racing Committee. The skate racing events range from public skating racing or marathon events to regional, national, and international Speed Skating championships. The Committee has a long-term plan for an annual series of public racing events and for hosting at least one annual championship event. The ultimate objective for the Committee is for Halifax and the Oval to host the World Junior Long Track Championships. A permanent facility on the Oval will play a role in providing the infrastructure to house athletes, coaches, officials, and VIPs during those events.

To ensure that Nova Scotia and Atlantic region athletes are prepared to be competitive when national events come to Halifax the Oval will play a large role in training those athletes. The needs of a high performance speed skater is different than that of someone using the Oval recreationally. A high performance athlete requires completing a warm-up including running or a stationary bike and stretching, and then staying warm while they put on their equipment before going on ice. A permanent facility on site would be able to house the training equipment required for high performance training and would be a comfortable home for developing athletes.

The Halifax Oval is unlike any other sport and recreation venue I have seen. Most venues just draw participants from its immediate area, or just those that are involved in the primary activity of the facility. The Halifax Oval draws people in from all over the province and the region for recreational and competitive skating in the winter and could do the same for activities during the rest of the season. What make the Oval attractive to people is the ability to show up and be able to access the equipment required for a particular activity. A permanent facility that is able to house sport equipment of all sorts to be used at the Oval or on the North Common throughout the year will be a great attraction.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



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