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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OPINION

Examiner Letters to the Editor: May 24

Readers speak out against the pickleball development and another suggests a downtown street redesign.

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People gather for a rally to save Bonnerworth Park in Peterborough on Saturday, May 18. The park is slated for \$4.4 million in development, including 16 pickleball courts.

Clifford Skarstedt Metroland file photo

What's really behind the pickleball court decision?

What's really behind council's refusal to pause its decision to build 16 pickleball courts and parking for 80 cars in Bonnerworth Park?

Why is the decision "a done deal" without knowing the results of the required noise, traffic, geotechnical and storm water studies?

Why is one group benefitting when many others will lose so much?

Is there a bigger plan in place?

Will the noise from 16 courts drive out the Peterborough Lawn Bowling Club so pickleball players can gain a clubhouse in the McDonnell Street Community Centre, and space for even more courts (they've publicly stated they need 32)?

Is it a coincidence that the mayor's wife is an active player in the local pickleball community?

Something isn't right. The taxpayers and citizens of Peterborough deserve better than "old boys" networks and lack of transparency.

Deb Scott, Peterborough

They don't care

Thank you to Tricia Clarkson for her May 16 article: [Pickleball decision will have consequences](#).

I'm sure Mayor Jeff Leal and the five councillors read this article and I hope they took notes. There are a lot of unanswered questions and Peterborough citizens are taking a stand, including senior citizens that reside at MaryCrest, across from Bonnerworth Park. They are adamant that they do not want these pickleball courts across from them. They enjoy the views of the park and green space and baseball games.

Do Leal and the five city councillors have solutions and any insight to the complaints that have been brought to the table? I doubt they have. Refusing to listen to the citizens of Peterborough and dismissing Joy Lachica's notice of motion to review new information about this project shows their true colours. They don't care.

Leal and the five councillors who voted against this notice of motion have shown poor judgment. What are they afraid to hear?

The reflection of this city council and Leal demonstrates their lack of any leadership for the City of Peterborough, and its citizens.

Jan Belfry, Peterborough

Seems odd to pave a park

Pickleball is clearly a growing sport and very popular with seniors. City council has determined that we need more courts. It seems odd in these environmentally aware times to pave a park rather than use areas that are already paved. Considering a commercial area, where the additional traffic might be welcome, seems reasonable. The blocks around the old G.E. and the old Rehill building seem to have many unused paved and vacant areas. The location would create no loss of green space and light pollution would remain fairly constant. The ground is already barren and paved. Perhaps some corporate co-operation could be requested or negotiated.

This would save a beautiful green space that is enjoyed today by residents and we could add new facilities and perhaps encourage economic growth in an area that might see several benefits.

And why only one location? Multiple smaller sites could produce less traffic disruption and neighbourhood opportunities to walk or bike to the courts. There must be a way to address the need without destroying a park and a neighbourhood.

It is wonderful that the city has identified a priority and are actively addressing it. That is the job. I question the process but applaud the intention. If we are spending our hard-earned tax dollars it should be seen as positive growth by the majority. I think we can do better.

Don Cordell, Peterborough

It's time to redesign downtown streets

George Street and Water Street were changed from two-way streets to twinned one-way streets in 1957. It's past time for a serious discussion about reversing that change.

Downtown streets have two functions. The first is to take drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users to the downtown — to work, to shop, to visit a government office, to attend a film, play, or concert, to go to a restaurant or café. The second is to convey people, mostly in cars, through the downtown, on their way to somewhere else.

The first function is vital to the downtown, which will not function unless people can get to everything that it offers. The second function is not without value, but none of that value goes to the downtown: quite the opposite. Cars which use downtown as a thoroughfare contribute nothing to the downtown but noise and air pollution and the heightened risk of a collision.

The design of streets reflects the values of a community. The current design of our George and Water streets — the multiple lanes of one-way traffic and the synchronized lights at intersections, which are intended to speed up traffic — gives priority to those going through the downtown over those going to the downtown. The message it sends about our values is that we don't really care to maximize the potential of our downtown. If we did care about that, downtown streets would be designed to prioritize the comfort and safety of pedestrians, because everyone who goes to our downtown becomes a pedestrian at some point. A system of two-way streets which incorporates cycle lanes, wide sidewalks, street trees, street furniture, and frequent pedestrian crossings will encourage people to live and work downtown, to relax there and to conduct business there. It will send the message that we value the heart of our city.

City council should confront this issue now, before regular maintenance is carried out on George and Water streets. Could there be a better time?

Mark Bullock, Peterborough

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