

Examiner Letters to the Editor: Aug. 15

Readers call for tax money to be spent on priorities, not pickleball.

Updated Aug. 15, 2024 at 5:02 a.m. | Aug. 15, 2024



A proposal by Councillor Keith Riel to revisit and discuss several city projects in order to find monies for other issues, like affordable housing and crumbling infrastructure, was incorrectly voted down, says an Examiner reader.

Metroland file photo

MPP Smith is correct

MPP Dave Smith is correct in saying the mayor and council of Peterborough have not done enough to increase our tax base, which helps with housing — among other things.

To not have service-ready land ready to go when called upon is very short-sighted.

Having a manufacturer in nearby townships may provide jobs, but it doesn't provide tax dollars. Peterborough needs a proactive policy of attracting manufacturing locally, not a reactive policy of waiting for the phone to ring and then trying to annex land we so badly need now.

Mark Williamson, Peterborough

These are your tax dollars

Having sat through yet another Peterborough city council meeting (Aug. 12), I was again appalled at the ineptness and callous manner in which city council and staff handled the issue of the budget crisis this city faces.

A proposal by Councillor Keith Riel to revisit and discuss several city projects in order to find monies for the very real problems of lack of affordable housing and crumbling infrastructure, was voted down by all councillors except Riel, Bierk, and Lachica.

The Bonnerworth Park project was one of the proposals they refused to revisit, so apparently spending \$4.4 million of taxpayers' money to put in place a complex that 400 people will use — negating the fact that over 8,000 people have signed a petition opposing it — has this council's and staff's full support.

Please contact your city councillor and demand they get their priorities in order. These are your tax dollars being spent on this project. They must hear your opposition regarding their support of it.

Ellen Seddon, Peterborough

Where is the mayor?

Opposition to the Bonnerworth development continues to grow, but where is the mayor? He continues to evade accountability as seen in his latest response to the Catholic School Board.

It is even more worrisome when two former mayors express concern and raise the same questions. Why this park? Why have other locations not been considered? Why were stakeholders not engaged?

Why is a valuable park and green space, in an under-serviced ward (identified in the city's recreational studies), to be replaced by a parking lot and pickleball courts for use by a small group of people?

The recent general committee discussion of the 2025 budget brought forward serious and "urgent" concerns raised by council. Those being housing, infrastructure and the downtown.

Peterborough continues to face increasing tax hikes. Homelessness dominates some city streets. Streets and trails beautifully maintained in the past are littered with garbage but, far worse, human despair.

Construction delays go months beyond stated timelines leaving the city impassable in parts, impacting businesses and tourism, and yet the speed of the Bonnerworth pickleball development would leave any municipality in awe!

In less than a year a development of this size has been approved, despite no prior feasibility, traffic, geotechnical, storm water or noise studies being conducted and is now set for construction in September.

Rather than listening or responding to the opposition and the many concerns raised, the mayor remains silent and continues to dig in. "Inexplicable" has become a key word in this battle to save this park. It's a suitable word. It's inexplicable that the mayor and staff would continue on this path, against all good sense and reason but, more importantly, against the greater needs of this city.

Our city is in a state of crisis, yet the mayor and city staff think it appropriate to spend millions on the destruction of two perfectly good parks. Please explain this to everyone!

John Gerelus, Peterborough

Reader has two issues

My first issue is the revised pickleball plan from city hall. The heat of the summer sun is still going to stop people from playing on asphalt, and a few less spaces doesn't really change anything.

In the next municipal election, I hope people remember who voted for it.

My second point is that driving south on George street, the old buried streetcar tracks are showing up more than ever.

Council should solve this problem once and for all by digging them up, instead of leaving them like previous councils have.

J.W. Martin, Peterborough

Let's adjust our priorities

[Re:Housing projects deferred](#). I think we can all agree that when our neighbour is in danger of losing their home due to increased costs, it would be insensitive to muse about where to put in the new pool, which we planned to replace our tennis courts and take up lawn space.

There are neighbours right now in Peterborough who are displaced, disrupted and now disappointed by the deferral, due to lack of funds, of Peterborough Housing Corporation projects.

I doubt they are concerned about where the much-debated pickleball courts are to be located. What they may wonder is why, when their home is in jeopardy, we as a community choose to spend millions of dollars on a project that is not a necessity, but a renovation of an area that is already functioning quite well and not in need of urgent change.

If we are to believe that housing is the top priority of this council, perhaps all available discretionary funds should be directed temporarily towards that.

My parents, part of the "Greatest Generation," once said to me:

"There's no trip to Florida until the roof is fixed."

Perhaps it is time to adjust our expectations.

Janet Antcliffe, Lakefield

Spend money where it's needed most

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed allocation of budget funds toward the projects in Bonnerworth and Knights of Columbus parks in our community.

While I understand some sports have gained popularity in recent years, I believe the resources required for these projects could be better utilized in other areas that would benefit a broader segment of our community.

As you are aware, there are several pressing needs that require immediate attention, such as the homeless crisis, substance addiction, affordable housing, upgrading our infrastructure and enhancing public safety.

Investing in these areas would have more significant and lasting impact on the overall wellbeing of our residents. Additionally, it is worth considering whether there are existing facilities that could be adapted or shared for these activities, thereby reducing the need for new construction and the associated costs.

I urge council to carefully reconsider the budget allocation and explore alternatives that align more closely with broader needs of our community. It is essential that our limited resources are spent in ways that maximize the benefit to all residents.

Judith Richardson, Peterborough

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