



# Peterborough Examiner Letters to the Editor: Aug. 3

Readers take issue with Peterborough Mayor Jeff Leal's pickleball response to school board.

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A large crowd gathered outside Peterborough City Hall in June, protesting the redevelopment of Bonnerworth Park.

Metroland file photo

## The mayor's 'provincial side' is showing

I just read the [mayor's response to the school board](#) regarding pickleball and thought, wow. Now that is his provincial side showing.

“This what we are doing and it will be good for you. You will enjoy it.” Who knows, maybe he is going to rewrite the high school athletic curriculum to include a pickleball program with appropriate funding provided to the board.

I have nothing against pickleball, as we have had an asphalt pad at our family cottage and have been playing it for many years. What I do have a problem with is this process.

While the city maintains it did a lot of consultation on the location, it obviously did not include some of the affected citizens — the neighbours who are losing their local park, minor baseball players who are losing two more diamonds, in addition to the ones at Morrow Park, the school board, and let's not forget the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, which never had a chance to "advise."

What is missing for me is what alternatives were looked at, and have any alternatives that have since been suggested been looked at?

Eastgate Park between the Mark Forester Pitch and Maria Street seems like a good spot to me. Set back from residences, lighting is there and tournament players could visit the Liftlock and the Canoe Museum while they are here. Just a thought.

*Paul Ayotte, Peterborough*

### **Mayor's response ignored all reason**

Mayor Jeff Leal's [written response to the school board's](#) pointed letter demonstrates his continued, inexplicable push to ignore all reason, all sense and, let's not forget, the tax-paying citizens of this city.

The school board's letter detailed the extensive use of Bonnerworth Park by St. Peter Catholic Secondary School and conveyed the board's disappointment in how the city conducted its 'consultation.'

Mayor Leal's response might as well have been a one-line: "Thank you for your letter, your letter is very important to us, but it's a done deal."

His vague comment that "the city is aware that teachers from your board, when the redevelopment is completed, will take students to Bonnerworth to learn and participate in the sport of pickleball" demonstrates his complete lack of respect for the school board.

To mention, "We all recognize the value of green space in a world of climate change" and then suggest that St. Peter's use Hamilton Park and Jackson Park makes no sense.

Does he really think that Hamilton Park or Jackson Park can accommodate field sports?

It's pitiful to have to explain to the mayor that Hamilton Park is a children's water park and is so close to the creek that the lower part of the park often floods and is unusable. Jackson Park is a forested nature trail.

The school board's athletic programs will now have to embrace pickleball, like it or not, and tax-paying citizens will have to fork out more money so these same students can be bused to alternate locations (if they exist).

All this so 400 people out of a population of 86,000 can play pickleball!

*Laurie Breese, Peterborough*

## Response was ‘a slap in the face’

What an unconscionable slap in the face the mayor has delivered to hundreds of students at nearby St. Peter Catholic Secondary School. [His July 11 response to the school board’s concerns](#) over the city’s lack of consultation and its plans to pave over Bonnerworth Park with pickleball courts and parking shows nothing but contempt for the school’s students.

The mayor’s suggestion that he looks forward to students playing pickleball at Bonnerworth Park serves as yet another demonstration of his continued arrogance and callousness towards the many park users and nearby residents who will suffer from the Bonnerworth project.

Moreover, the mayor’s suggestion that other suitable sites are located within 1.3 kilometres is ingenuous, to say the least. He ignores the fact that Hamilton and Jackson parks are completely unsuited to the school’s athletic activities he plans to eliminate from Bonnerworth Park.

Queen Mary Elementary School uses its grounds for its own programs. Other sites are much too far away; replacement tennis courts the city plans at Knights of Columbus Park are 3.5 kilometres from the school and unusable ... except perhaps for a walking program that would allow St. Pete’s students to at least gaze wistfully at the courts for a few short seconds before the long trek back to school and their next class. But of course the mayor knows all this.

The mayor’s callousness and complete lack of empathy towards the students in his remarks proves he has lost his way. It is unfortunate these same students are too young to censure his scornful remarks by voting him out of office.

*Richard Scott, Peterborough*