

Dear Mayor and Members of East Hants Municipal Council,

On behalf of the East Hants Soccer Club, we would like to express our concerns regarding the elimination of the resident user discount for municipal facility rentals at the East Hants Sportsplex.

When the Municipality assumed operation of the Sportsplex in 2024, local organizations such as ours benefited from a 20% discount on facility rentals. We understood and appreciated Council's decision in February 2025 to phase out that discount, reducing it to 10% for one year before eliminating it entirely as of September 1, 2026. However, as we approach the final removal of the discount, we feel it is important to highlight the significant impact this will have on community-based sport organizations and the families we serve.

The East Hants Soccer Club is a non-profit organization focused on providing accessible, affordable, and inclusive soccer opportunities for children, youth, and adults throughout our municipality. Facility rental costs represent one of our largest operating expenses. The loss of the local user discount will substantially increase these costs and place additional financial pressure on the club.

As an organization whose membership is overwhelmingly comprised of East Hants residents, it is difficult to understand why local residents utilizing a municipally owned facility will no longer receive any recognition or benefit through a resident rate structure and will be paying the same rate as organizations from outside East Hants. The Sportsplex is a valued community asset funded and supported by local taxpayers, and we believe there should be consideration given to organizations whose primary purpose is serving East Hants families.

The increase in facility costs will inevitably force difficult decisions. Without some form of resident discount or community sport rate, the club may have no choice but to increase registration fees, reduce programming opportunities, limit field and indoor training availability, or seek additional fundraising from families who are already facing rising costs in many areas of daily life. These outcomes run counter to our shared goal of encouraging active lifestyles, healthy communities, and broad participation in recreational sport.

Youth sports provide benefits that extend far beyond the playing field. They foster physical health, mental well-being, social connection, leadership development, and community pride. Maintaining affordability is critical to ensuring that all children and families, regardless of financial circumstances, have the opportunity to participate.

We respectfully ask Council to reconsider the complete elimination of the discount for local organizations or explore alternative models that recognize and support community-based groups serving East Hants residents. Even a modest resident or non-profit rate would help mitigate the impact and allow organizations like ours to continue delivering affordable programming to the community.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued support of recreation and community development in East Hants. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and share additional information on the specific impacts these changes will have on our members and programming.

Sincerely,

East Hants Soccer Club