

This letter is written with respect for Mr. Eldon Hebb, Municipal Council, the CAO's Office, and all those entrusted with managing public resources on behalf of the residents of East Hants.

I am a lifelong resident of East Hants, a homeowner and taxpayer within the municipality for the past five years, and a graduate of both HERH and the REC. Throughout my life, I have been deeply involved in local sport as both an athlete and coach, including time with the East Hants Stingrays, the Penguins minor hockey association, and, most significantly, over 15 years with the East Hants Soccer Club. Those years included five provincial championships, some of the best memories of my life, and many of the experiences that helped shape my connection to this community.

I am writing to express my concern regarding the municipality's decision to discontinue the longstanding facility rental accommodation provided to the East Hants Soccer Club (EHSC). I do so as a resident only. I have no formal affiliation with EHSC, nor do I have children currently participating in the program.

My concern stems from the belief that this decision is both unnecessary and counterproductive. By all measures, the Municipality of East Hants is in a strong financial position. Recent audited statements reflect substantial population growth, a growing tax base, an accumulated surplus of approximately \$138 million, an annual budget surplus exceeding \$6 million last year, and most noteworthy to me: more than \$2 million in annual interest income from capital reserves. These are indicators of a thriving and financially healthy municipality. I would deviate here only to say, thriving communities prioritize and invest in their youth, without exception. I believe most things in life have room for grey area, but on this matter to me it's black and white. Thriving communities prioritize their youth... full stop. Cutting costs for youth programs should be an absolute last resort, and as the financial position of MEH continues to improve and our municipal investment income grows with each and every month at rates that are quite frankly non-standard for a rural municipality, the last thing I would like to see happening is the municipality opting to charge a NFP more for a space they've called home since the dome first opened.

In that context, increasing costs for a long-standing non-profit organization that provides affordable youth sport appears difficult to justify. These additional costs are unlikely to be absorbed by the organization itself and will instead be passed on to local families (confirmed, per discussions I've had with EHSC board members). As a result, participation in what has historically been one of the community's most affordable sports will become less accessible for many residents.

Strong communities invest in their youth, particularly when they have the financial capacity to do so. Across Canada, all three levels of governments at all levels are making significant investments in soccer participation, youth engagement, and community sport infrastructure as the sport continues to grow in popularity in the wake of the 2026 World Cup. It is disappointing to see a local organization that has served East Hants families for decades facing avoidable cost increases that will reduce accessibility at a time when the municipality appears well positioned to support it.

I believe there's a chance that this decision was nothing more than an oversight which will be in progress to be reversed by the time this memo is received. Should that not be the case, I urge you to consider the benefits of having a healthy and happy community. Consider then, how happy and healthy communities are made and sustained; by meaningful investment in wellbeing and quality of life. Further still, consider communities around the province that have been forced to erode these sorts of programs out of necessity and ask yourselves why we're following suit at a time that our guaranteed investment returns are eclipsing \$2M each year. You have the option to do the right thing here, please act on our behalf and do so.

Thank you,

Kent Smith