

Town of Canton, Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE SELECTMEN

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
CHARLES J. ASPINWALL

February 21, 2017

Mr. Leo P. Roy, Commissioner
Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance
Office of Public Outreach
251 Causeway Street
Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Town of Canton Official Comments - South Shore Rink Feasibility Study

Dear Commissioner Roy:

Pursuant to the instruction to provide comments by March 2, 2017 concerning the above-noted matter, please consider this submission for the record.

Thank you for scheduling the DCR's public outreach meeting of February 13, 2017, and witnessing first-hand the passionate support of the Canton Board of Selectmen and the citizens of Canton for the continued siting of the John P. Metropolis rink in Canton, serving the regional needs of the south shore. Allow us to briefly summarize the main points raised at our public meeting and in communications generally with the DCR, while focusing more closely on certain of the related issues.

- The people of Canton stand united in its support for a rebuilt rink in Canton. There is no dissent among Canton residents – unlike some residents in Norwood – to the proposed locations in our community.
- The three proposed Canton sites are far better suited for highway access, parking, expansion, traffic flow and residential impact than the more limited site in Norwood.
- The Town has had a successful partnership with the DCR for approximately 45 years in managing and operating a well-run facility that has served both the interests of the Town and the surrounding region.
- In 1973, the DCR, the Town and firefighters across the region dedicated the John P. Metropolis rink in Canton to a firefighter who served his country proudly in WWII and in the role as president of his firefighters local. There is no reason to forget his legacy now.
- Canton has a number of employees (3 FTE's and approximately 20 part time employees) who were responsible for the maintenance and operation of the Metropolis rink and who look forward to getting back to work on a newly constructed rink in Canton.

- The other private rinks in Canton are just that - private, for-profit rinks that do not provide a long-term, subsidized solution to the region's rink needs. That point was amply demonstrated by the youth and hockey groups that attended your meeting in Canton.

While proponents for the placement of a rink in Norwood have alleged Canton has less need than Norwood for a public rink, due to the fact there are four sheets of ice currently in Canton and none in Norwood, the Norwood proponents ignore the fact that both Canton and Norwood are presently equally situated with no public ice rink. That private companies may have built rinks in Canton is immaterial to the *capacity* of ice available specifically to the Town of Canton's youth groups and teams. In fact, these private ventures are routinely renting out ice time to the region as a whole.

Further, there is nothing preventing the Town of Norwood from approving private ventures similar to Canton. In fact, it could be said that Canton is a better locale than Norwood for a new public rink largely because the private sector has chosen to invest in Canton over Norwood - indicating that Canton has better highway access and is more centrally located than Norwood to the region's south shore communities. Demand has been shown to be greater in Canton, given its attractive location for the overall region.

Moreover, while proponents for a rink placement in Norwood claim their plan is shovel ready and has received authorizations from various state officials, the truth is that the plan has not received adequate funding or appropriations necessary to proceed. In fact, as seen at Canton's February 13 meeting, some of Norwood's own residents are not in favor of the Norwood plan.

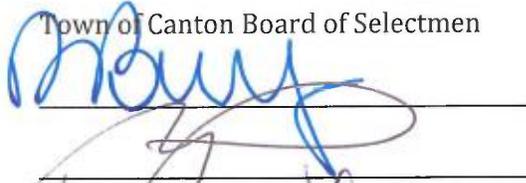
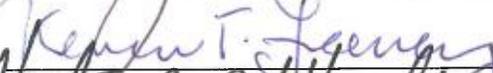
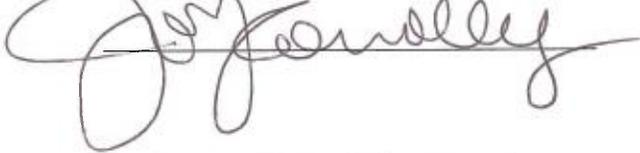
Additionally, the Norwood plan does not include the use of insurance proceeds that *are* available to build a new rink in the Town of Canton. A new rink in Norwood will cost millions of dollars more than it would cost to build in Canton because Canton can apply its insurance proceeds to the cost of the rink. Along those lines, the Canton Board of Selectmen has specifically authorized its counsel to begin discussions with DCR's counsel regarding both the rebuilding of the rink in Canton and the use of available insurance proceeds, in accordance with Sections 13 and 8 of the Amended Skating Rink Lease dated July 1, 2005, which is subject to termination in 2030. Further, should the Town and DCR jointly agree that a new rink be built in Canton as we propose - rather than rebuild the existing Metropolis rink in accordance with the terms of the Amended Lease - the Town offers to commence joint funding discussions with DCR at your earliest convenience.

Finally, the Commission should build a new rink in the Town of Canton because Canton has suffered a major loss with the collapse of the roof at the John P. Metropolis rink. As noted, for approximately 45 years, the Town of Canton has been the dutiful custodian of this state property and has run the rink operation in fine order. Even if otherwise permitted under the terms of the Amended Lease to compel the rebuilding of the Metropolis rink in Norwood - which it is not - Norwood's now ten year campaign for its own rink should not be permitted to leverage the insurance loss that occurred in the Town of Canton as grounds for its own claims to a rink. Canton officials would certainly not be trying to take advantage of Norwood's loss if the circumstances were reversed.

In summary, the Town of Canton Board of Selectmen wishes to thank you and your staff for the public outreach meetings that have now occurred in both Canton and Norwood. We wish to continue to work with you, your department and your counsel in bringing this matter to a mutually beneficial conclusion as soon as reasonably practicable.

Respectfully submitted,

Town of Canton Board of Selectmen

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Murray", written over a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be "Kenneth T. Langan", written over a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to be "Victor D. Del Vecchio", written over a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "James T. Hargrove", written over a horizontal line.

cc: Senator Walter F. Timilty
Representative William C. Galvin
James T. Hargrove, Esq.