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Town of The Blue Mountains

32 Mill Street Box 310

Thornbury, Ontario N0H 2P0

February 14, 2019

Attn: Shawn Everitt, CAO

Cc: Alar Soever, Ryan Gibbons, Aaron McMullen

Re: Blue Mountains Curling Centre (BMCC)

Shawn, I am writing this letter to you to ask for assistance from the Town to finish our first year of curling at the BMCC. In many ways we have had a very successful year of operations. Any new business in its first year of operation can be difficult and ours is no exception. We have had many successes and I will point out some of these to you as well as where we need to improve if we are to go forward.

Membership is currently at 97 members. Our goal was 150, but for the first year we feel this is still very good. Out of this number approximately 75-80% are beginners and new to curling (new to Thornbury also). The ages vary, and average between 50 and 60 years, not including the student program on Fridays. This is a very good foundation for a new club/curling centre.

So far we have introduced and taught many new curlers who we believe will join as full members next year. Word is spreading and will continue to spread about what we are doing for our community. What we lack are some of the long term residents of the area who we were told would want to join but we have not seen their support so far.

We are getting tremendous support from our local schools in Thornbury and Headwaters Academy in Heathcote, with over 200 children participating as part of their school curriculum. This was our goal from the beginning and the children are loving it. We still have three more Fridays of curling for the Beaver Valley Community School. Curtis Page, Principal, has been working with Board members Barb Little and Julia Atkinson to set up these very important programs for us.



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Fridays have proven to be very successful and the ice rink is full all day long. The kids have been coming from 10:30am to 3:00pm with Friday nights being full with a meet and greet (jitney) format, and then down to The Corner Café for drinks and camaraderie afterwards. We tried food and drinks at the arena but this proved to be too costly for liquor licencing and inconsistent food choices and times.

Saturdays have been a problem and we thought this might be the case from the start as other clubs also struggle with Saturday curling. Bonspiels help but we were not in a position to run these with so many new curlers getting to know each other. We believed we would get weekenders and long term residents of the area on Saturdays, but this never happened. That being said, Saturdays have been excellent for instruction but these are still smaller numbers.

In recent weeks we have picked up more groups who pay for ice time and come out for a fun time of curling. Two groups totalling 32 people paid for instruction and play on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>, and the previous weekend we had two smaller groups of 8. Presumably we will be do better with groups in the future, as word gets out and we figure out the challenges. Sponsorships from the community have not been as strong as we originally expected. We were told at the beginning of this venture that certain parties would step up to help. However they either backed out or have been noncommittal. We received some sponsorships dollars from Tim Hortons, Ashton Blinds, and a local builder, as well as raffle ticket donations from The Westin Hotel, Squire Johns, The Lily Pad, The Peaks Ski Club, and others. Founding members have also helped with \$500 donations as well as a \$1000 silent donor from a friend and curler from Newmarket who wanted to help us be successful.

We have plans for future raffles, silent auction and a dinner dance is in the works for a fundraiser to be held at the end of March during the Challenge Cup.

The Challenge Cup is a big curling event for the Town of the Blue Mountains and surrounding area. It will bring in 60 teams of curlers and their families who will stay at our hotels (The Westin), eat at our local restaurants, and shop with our local merchants.

A meeting was held last May 2018 led by Stephen Chenier, Executive Director of Curl Ontario. Also in attendance were representatives from BMCC, Collingwood CC, Meaford CC, and Stayner CC, to discuss this event. At first the other curling clubs were very sceptical as they believed this would hurt their memberships. I spoke to the group explaining how this would benefit all of our communities economically, just like a World Cup ski event. At the end of the discussion, all clubs were on side.

BEAVER VALLEY ARENA



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Currently we anticipate that we will not be able to cover the contracted amount of \$5789.50 on March 1, 2019. However we believe that we can make a partial payment on March 15th towards the amount due. Also, if we shut down at 4:00pm on Saturdays thereby getting a credit for 5 hours of ice time on the three Saturdays in March, it would help to reduce our final shortfall. Saturday afternoons after 4:00 pm have been consistently quiet. It seems to us that the Challenge Cup should more than make up for this final shortfall for the month of March.

We, the BMCC board, are asking that you discuss this with members of Council and if need be, we would be willing to sit down to work out a solution to this shortfall.

Our Board has worked extremely hard on the start-up of the BMCC. We are aware that there have been several attempts in the past to get curling restarted in Thornbury and have found out that it is no small feat. We are very proud of our accomplishments so far and hope to continue to improve and grow this great venture with your help.

I might add that Aaron and the Arena staff have been great getting the ice to where it needs to be. We have purchased all the equipment for the Arena and our Curling Centre. We have a 5 year plan in place with Curl Ontario for payment of the curling rocks. The main reason the Challenge Cup is here is because of the BMCC and our \$30,000 investment in curling stones and ice making equipment. We thought we had a sponsor for the rocks but unfortunately this did not materialize.

Our plan is to put on a deputation to Council for next year as now we have a much better idea of what is needed and what might work for us and for The Town and the entire community. I know that it has to be a win/win for everyone and everyone needs to be on side for this to work.

We realize that hockey is big here and it will continue to be a big part in the Town of The Blue Mountains as we hope curling will be. It can't always be about the dollars which we expect will come, especially with the Challenge Cup. Tweaking the days and times might be an option to help us in the future.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Lloyd Luckock, President, BMCC