



"for the use of the inhabitants of the town of Halifax as Common forever" (1763-2025)

June 9, 2025,

To HRM Mayor and Councillors:

The Friends of Halifax Common raise your attention to the numerous problems with funding a permanent stadium on the Wanderers Grounds and why you should oppose this, specifically concerning the Wanderers Grounds staff report that was released to the public on Friday June 6.

FACTS:

- Prior to 2017, the Wanderers Field was fully used to capacity by amateur sports players. HRM staff's report (1) emphasized that **any use of the Wanderers Field for a professional team was to be temporary, for a trial period, no park space was to be lost ;**
- On June 20, 2017, **without any public consultation,** HRM councillors unanimously approved construction of a **temporary stadium** at the Grounds for a future professional soccer team;
- The Wanderers Block was deliberately and explicitly excluded from public consultation for the Halifax Common Master Plan despite objections from the public; claims to the contrary are untrue;
- HRM provided \$1million to the private for-profit club to upgrade the Field for the private user;
- HRM has continued to pay for utilities, water, scoreboards, and care of the field. The soccer organization has paid as little as \$1200/game and even now, less than \$3000 per game;
- The soccer organization controls bookings (despite claims to the contrary) and has virtually excluded use of the Wanderers Field by amateur players.
- In 2023, Derek Martin requested that HRM Council provide his company and his team with a 30-year lease and to spend \$40 million

(no doubt that sum has inflated) to build a permanent stadium on public land-this is not economically viable;

- Claims of economic benefit for communities that devote public tax dollars to building private sports stadiums are false. A 2022 analysis of 130 studies published in the Journal of Economic Surveys, **The Impact of Professional Sports Franchises and Venues on Local Economies: A Comprehensive Survey** "...confirms the decades-old consensus of **very limited economic impacts of professional sports teams and stadiums**. Even with added non-pecuniary social benefits from quality-of-life externalities and civic pride, welfare improvements from hosting teams tend to fall well short of covering public outlays. Thus, the large subsidies commonly devoted to constructing professional sports venues are not justified as worthwhile public investments."
- Secrecy should have no place in decisions about the Halifax Common. HRM citizens have been shut out of the this on-going plan by stealth to privatize their play field since its beginning-most recently with HRM's in camera decision to purchase Mr. Martin's second hand bleachers.

Plans for a permanent stadium on the Wanderers Field need to halt.

The stadium committed to by HRM was temporary, pop-up and to be removed. The professional teams are successful. It's time for them to find/buy their own field and stop the private for profit use of the public's playing field.

The 240 acres of common land, **granted "to and for the use of the inhabitants of the Town of Halifax forever"** needs to be for the use of **all our citizens** and not given over to a private for-profit enterprise.

Yours truly,

Friends of Halifax Common Board of Directors

1. p. 5, HRM Staff Report, June 20, 2017: <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/170620rc14113.pdf>
2. FHC's work to ensure HRM respects its commitment to citizens to protect and play fair with the Halifax Wanderers Grounds can be found here: <https://halifaxcommon.ca/tag/wanderers-grounds/>