



CITY HALL News...
From Around Durham Region
Brock Uxbridge Scugog Oshawa
Pickering Ajax Whitby Clarington



THE SOARING COSTS TO MAINTAIN O.H.L. TEAMS

**** HOW MUCH CAN TAXPAYERS KEEP CONTRIBUTING? ****

IT HAS BEEN REMARKED that the quality of civic life within any community will, out of necessity, require ongoing financial support for various sporting venues, in addition to arts & cultural institutions. Municipal governments transmit those costs onto local taxpayers, compelling them as individuals to take on the responsibility of paying for facilities and programs they may never use.

Residents of Oshawa are by now fully aware of the significant commitment made by Mayor Carter and councillors to offer further financial support for the Oshawa Generals Hockey Club – to the tune of \$50 million. This newspaper was the first to inform local citizens of the deal negotiated between the City and other stakeholders that will see major renovations to the Tribute Communities Centre completed by late 2027.

In a press release posted on the City's website, the renovations are offered up as a necessary 'modernization' of the existing facility, including a main entrance expansion, interior alterations with seating for up to 7000 fans, and an updated concession area.

Research into this topic shows a marked trend among a growing number of municipalities choosing to invest significant taxpayer resources into attracting or maintaining Ontario Hockey League franchises, with some communities having done so for decades.

To its credit, the OHL has an impressive track record as a leading supplier of talent for the National Hockey League. There are 20 teams in total, with 17 of them based here in Ontario, and the league is well regarded for providing hockey scholarships.

At that same time, there is a strong desire within today's OHL landscape to run individual franchises like Supercentres, in large state-of-the-art venues. Beleaguered taxpayers are right to question whether the practice of supporting OHL teams and their owners' ever-increasing demands has, over time, grown to be far too expensive.

Prior to the \$50 million announcement at the Tribute Communities Centre, an endorsement for an even larger investment was offered up by city councillors in Brantford, to the tune of \$140 million for a new sport-entertainment centre. This, in a community that only a few years ago saw fit to sell a municipally owned golf course to better enable funding for local affordable housing. One Brantford councillor raised a concern that the funding was not being allocated towards a new hospital in partnership with the provincial government, telling his colleagues, "A hospital would serve 100 percent of the constituents, versus the five percent that could attend a hockey game."

In Kitchener, home of the successful Rangers hockey team, the municipality is moving ahead with \$2 million in renovations to the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium that will see a new restaurant built opposite an existing sports bar.

Unlike the Oshawa Generals, the Kitchener Rangers team is publicly owned by season ticket subscribers. The team itself will be footing the bill for what they see as ambitious changes necessary for their club to "remain competitive" in the rapidly changing world of OHL hockey.

Being a historic club isn't good enough anymore, especially after the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) south of the border made a landmark decision to allow players with junior hockey experience into its ranks beginning next season. The move gives players more leverage when choosing their destination, and the OHL is beginning to feel the pinch as some players leave the league earlier than expected to head to schools in the U.S.

None of this bodes well for keeping the costs associated with OHL franchises anywhere near affordable for Ontario municipalities. The renovation details to Kitchener's 'Aud' as it is known by fans, sound somewhat familiar to those the Oshawa Generals are now anticipating. The entire Rangers business office will be dedicated to the players, with dressing room improvements, a gym and workout area, players' lounge and even a pool therapy section, among other things.

Oshawa's own arena, completed in 2006, has already seen an expanded gym, a new video review room for team members, and an area that offers players better nutrition options by way of a fitted kitchen.

It is known that OHL teams have the ability to boost local economies through revenue generated by games, merchandise sales, and other businesses. With regard to the business of hockey, the value of the top five teams is as follows: The Ottawa 67s at \$55.53 million, The Mississauga Steelheads at \$44.85 million, the Hamilton Bulldogs at \$32.69 million, The London Knights at \$23.02 million, and the Kitchener Rangers at \$13.78 million. The Oshawa Generals came in 8th place at \$9.41 million.

Which brings us to comments made by Generals owner Rocco Tullio during a recent podcast with Mayor Dan Carter, in which he said, "The last thing I wanted to do was take the Generals down the road to the city of Pickering... but, we have to make sure we have the tools and the resources... If you have success, people believe in you. Our next priority is to put a blueprint in place that allows us to host the Memorial Cup here. I want to showcase our fans, we do it every game, but I want to put it on the world stage. I want to show everyone in the world stage that, hey... this is what we get on a nightly basis, and now you get to see it on a major scale."

Does that sound like someone who simply loves the game of hockey, or could taxpayers be forgiven for thinking their \$50 million contribution is a boost, not only to Mr. Tullio's self-esteem, but to the future value of his franchise?

In answer to a question posed by Mayor Carter as to whether his colleagues in the world of junior hockey were jealous of the \$50 million deal that was negotiated, Mr. Tullio had this to say, "Kingston called me already, and they are up for renewal and they want to do the exact same thing...so they've called to pick my brain."

All of which describes a situation where one significant financial contribution inevitably leads to a series of similar negotiations, all of which follow in perfect sequence.
Oh, the possibilities are limitless.



Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

Keep Flags and Classrooms Neutral; Protecting Childhood, Not Promoting Agendas

By Councillor Lisa Robinson

Every June, institutions across Canada are pressured to fly the Pride flag in recognition of Pride Month. What began as a civil rights movement has

evolved into something far more political and ideological—one that many school boards and parents are now rightfully questioning. Increasingly, school boards are refusing to raise the Pride flag, not out of hatred or fear, but out of a sincere desire to protect childhood and maintain the neutrality of our public institutions.

Let's be honest: the Pride flag today isn't just about acceptance or inclusion. It has become a symbol of an agenda that centers on adult themes—sexuality and gender identity—across an ever-expanding spectrum. When government buildings and schools fly that flag, they're not just promoting kindness, they're promoting an ideology. And when it comes to children, that crosses a line.

Children are impressionable. Schools should be places of learning, not arenas for social experimentation. Parents have every right to demand that education remain focused on reading, math, science, and history, not personal pronouns and sexual identities. This isn't about homophobia or transphobia. It's about age-appropriateness, parental rights, and keeping politics out of the classroom.

Let me be clear: I have never opposed just the Pride flag—I've opposed any political or identity-based flag flying on government buildings. That's not hate. That's a call for neutrality. Our government institutions, especially our schools, should fly only the national flag, the provincial flag, and the flag honoring veterans who died defending our freedoms. That's what unity looks like. That's what respect for all Canadians looks like—not elevating one group above another by displaying their symbols on public property.

I know firsthand what it costs to stand up for neutrality. I lost pay and faced public shaming in 2023 when I said I didn't believe in flying any flag for any group. My colleague's lied and twisted my words, accusing me of being racist or hateful, because I stood for equal treatment. That's the irony of today's climate: demand neutrality, and you're labeled intolerant.

There's a growing grassroots response to this pressure. Every year, thousands participate in the Pride Walkout Day, organized in part by Campaign Life Coalition. It's a peaceful act of resistance—a stand for childhood, for parental rights, and for the belief that tolerance doesn't require blind allegiance to every symbol or slogan.

Refusing to fly ideological flags is not an act of hate—it's an act of principle. It protects the integrity of our institutions and preserves the innocence of our children. We can teach respect and kindness without hanging a new flag every month. Government buildings are not billboards. Schools are not soapboxes. And our children are not pawns.

Let's return to common sense. Let's keep government neutral, classrooms safe, and childhood sacred.

Canada's justice system is the biggest risk to our national security

By Scott McGregor

Legal rules are being weaponized by criminals and foreign actors to delay justice and derail national security cases.

The recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling involving the Edmonton Police Service and the disclosure of a police officer's past misconduct may seem like a routine legal decision. But it's a wake-up call for how our justice system handles complex cases involving national security, transnational crime and terrorism.

The case involved an officer whose past disciplinary records—officially expunged—were requested by defence counsel to challenge the officer's credibility in court. At the heart of the case is a question: Should old or expunged police disciplinary records be shared with defence lawyers, even if they've been legally wiped clean (meaning they are no longer part of the officer's record)? The court said yes, arguing that all relevant information must be available so accused individuals can defend themselves fully and fairly.

That's a principle I support. Our legal system is built on fairness. But when applied too broadly or without clear limits, this rule can be exploited, particularly by sophisticated criminals or hostile foreign actors who know how to manipulate the system from within.

As someone who has spent decades in military, law enforcement and intelligence roles, and now advises on threats like organized crime, terrorism and foreign interference, I've seen firsthand how procedural rights can be turned into tactical weapons.

This isn't just a hypothetical concern. Consider R. v. Jordan, a landmark Supreme Court decision. It was meant to address delays in the justice system and ensure timely trials. But it also imposed strict deadlines—18 months for provincial court cases and 30 months for superior court. If a trial exceeds these limits, charges can be stayed, no matter how serious the offence.

Now imagine combining that rule with a demand to disclose every piece of police history—even records long since cleared. Defence lawyers can flood the system with disclosure motions, many irrelevant, to stall proceedings. Once the clock runs out, the case may be tossed.

When cases involve national security, terrorism or organized crime, that's not just a legal loophole; it's a threat to public safety. So how do we protect the integrity of the courtroom without allowing bad actors to exploit it? Here are four practical steps:

Give judges more discretion

Judges need stronger authority to reject disclosure requests clearly aimed at delay. If the information doesn't materially affect the case, it shouldn't stall proceedings. This would prevent misuse before it starts.

Create clear rules for national security cases

Cases involving terrorism, organized crime or foreign interference may require tailored procedures. This could include special handling of sensitive intelligence or even dedicated national security courts—models already used in the U.S. and U.K.

Modernize disclosure laws

Parliament should review disclosure rules and introduce carve-outs where full disclosure could do more harm than good, especially when intelligence sources or foreign threats are involved. These changes must still protect the rights of the accused but recognize the stakes.

Set boundaries around expunged records

If a police officer's record has been legally cleared, there must be strict limits on when that information can be revived. Otherwise, the concept of a clean slate loses meaning and public trust in the disciplinary process erodes. The bigger picture is this: our justice system must evolve to meet the realities of a world where lawfare—the strategic use of legal processes to disrupt democratic institutions—is a growing threat. Hostile governments, cartels and cybercriminals don't follow the rules, but they're increasingly adept at weaponizing ours. Striking a balance doesn't mean choosing between fairness and security. It means modernizing our legal framework so that justice remains principled and resilient in the face of today's threats.

Canadians deserve a justice system that is both fair and fit for purpose in today's world.

Scott McGregor is managing partner and CEO of Close Hold Intelligence Consulting Ltd. He co-authored The Mosaic Effect: How the Chinese Communist Party Started a Hybrid War in America's Backyard.



LET HIM DO HIS JOB WE DO FLYERS THAT MUCH BETTER...

Durham's TRUSTED Flyer Distributor

ONE LOW RATE ANY QUANTITY ANYWHERE IN DURHAM

905-432-2657

WE BEAT OR MATCH ANY COMPETITORS RATE

12 c