

To: Lynn Strachan; Jeff Lehman
Subject: Skateboard Park

Hello Mayor Lehman and Councillor Strachan.

I am contacting you due to concerns of the skate park located at Queens park. I did share concerns early spring of last year in the hopes that some improvements could be developed in dealing with some of the safety issues at the park but, feel no changes were ever made.

The skate park is well utilized and serves to meet needs of many youth to maintain a level of physical fitness while also having a social element included. It is a sport that is easily affordable for most anyone as well.

While our parks are supposed to be for families and children the skate park is in an entire league of its own. While all other parks in our city are held to high standards our skate park is in desperate need of attention. Being that I have an eight year old child who is an avid skate boarder, we as a family tend to spend a great deal of time at the park. Last year I voiced safety concerns to parks and rec, bylaw and the City of Barrie Police but again nothing has changed. Although when police are called response times are exceptional in most cases.

This past weekend I observed several different groups of individuals openly smoking illegal substances in open view at the park, cigarette smoking is a regular occurrence, open alcohol, fights etc.

On Saturday I contacted police after leaving the park because of a group of young adults had an open liquor and were drinking and smoking marijuana. We left the park due to our discomfort and returned Sunday morning to find it littered with shattered and jared pieces of glass. My husband and I spent our entire morning cleaning the park of the garbage and sweeping up the glass in order that the kids there could skateboard safely.

While there on Sunday we again called police after two adult woman got into a physical altercation while the park was packed full of kids.

While the city and the police are implementing cameras for the downtown, I would urge council to consider including the skate park. The trees that were put up as a barrier years ago, between the baseball diamond and the skate park presently only act as a means of being able to hide the illegal activity taking place at the park. The area is a public urinal and littered with empty beer cases as well as much other debris. The police rarely go to the park (unless called) and when they arrive the kids call out loudly that the police are there as way of perhaps warning others that may be engaged in illegal activity.

I had brought forth suggestions last year that the city consider installing a "Mosquito" such as what was being installed in some of the other city parks to curb the illegal activity and vandalism.

At present the park is the furthest from being a place where families feel welcomed. The park needs surveillance of some sort and safety considerations.

Please consider the following:

- with the of the fence structure is a safety issue because when bullying occurs it can easily trap kids as there are only two exists. Perhaps the fence could be eliminated and instead of a camera and mosquito installed. Other cities such as Markham do not have there skate park enclosed.

-drugs are rampant at the park and due to lack of a regular police presence at the park it is ongoing

-open alcohol frequently

-garbage strewn everywhere and often times broken glass

-cigarette smoking

-fights

-drug dealing

I feel strongly that this park which is in the centre of our city and well utilized by many children and youth deserves a committed investment from the city. Families and youth of all ages should be able to attend the park without fearing for their safety or having to

leave due to a sense of intimidation.

Most of the youth that attend the park are well behaved and respectful while a few others are ruining it for all.

I have attached some photos of the garbage in and around the park that is present on a regular basis.

I would be more than happy to discuss further and most of all I would appreciate meeting with you at the park to bring to your attention some of the issues.

I appreciate your attention to this important safety concern and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Kindly,

Connie Positano