

Delegation before the Planning Committee respecting the 'motion' for sale of public park space and the Bay and Strachan property currently known as The Sunset Cultural Garden. March 21, 2017.

Hamilton City Hall.

Hello, Thank you to the clerk and the Planning Committee for allowing me to speak.

My name is Damin Starr, my family and I are financial donors to the Sunset Cultural Garden, located at Bay and Strachan respectively. As donors, our intention is to support the neighborhood efforts, not only to plant seeds, lay gravel and place stones, but to plant ideas, lay new paths of community engagement, and place creativity in a public space that would (otherwise by example) sit barren . . . until a stranger brings their vision. These rare efforts have taken place in measurable 'good faith' at Bay and Strachan and we (as a city) would be wise to cognitive of this before choosing the lands of which we apply the generic terminology of "surplus" in public dialog. My family and I see value when our fellow citizens bring energy and life to their communities and that energy is reflected in a city worthy of raising a child and aging successfully.

I am not specifically critical of the motion being brought forward today, nor do I envy the many difficult decisions our council and committee members make each and every day, but I caution the message being sent when parkland and community parkettes become the 'only' viable options recommended for development. Having been born in Hamilton, a proponent of city building efforts and making a point to familiarize myself with all areas, I must admit, it's shocking to think we have reached this kind tipping point?

I trust we've examined and exhausted all adaptive reuse options?

If we genuinely ever want to see the utilization of our parks and otherwise baseball diamonds like those in the Eastwood Precinct improve, we may be best served 'weighing heavy' the message today's motions are sending to the living, breathing communities that help condition us and ultimately define our priorities.

Humbly,

Damin Starr