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Mayor Fred Eisenberger and Members of Council  
City of Hamilton  
Hamilton City Hall  
71 Main Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario.  
L8P 4Y5

August 15, 2020

### **COMMONWEALTH GAMES HOSTING PROPOSAL - REQUEST FOR PLEBISCITE**

Honourable Mayor and Members of Council:

With regards to the current proposal being brought forward by a private consortium who is requesting that the City of Hamilton consider hosting the Commonwealth Games, there are still several unanswered questions and broad implications which may potentially result in a significant hardship for Hamilton residents which need to be considered.

Several members of Council have indicated the need to receive additional information before making any decision about the proposed hosting plan and there is a growing movement within our community which firmly opposes any such proposal being ratified. It would seem logical and prudent that any effort to secure additional details and information about hosting this event, should include, a measure of the current level of city-wide support for this event.

Municipalities are granted the authority under Canada law, to initiate a plebiscite if it considers the need to solicit an expression of opinion related to public matters or concern which in this case, relates to the proposed hosting of the Commonwealth Games.

#### **Request for Council Motion**

Whereas there are still several unanswered questions with regards to potential risks involved with hosting the Commonwealth Games and there appears to be significant public opposition for this proposed event, there exists a need to accurately engage and measure the current level of public support in the best interests of Hamilton residents. The proposed resolution being brought forward involves the completion of a plebiscite (encompassing the bid periods of 2026 and 2030); that any subsequent costs associated with completing this plebiscite, should be assumed by the private sector bid group who has brought forth this proposal; furthermore, that this plebiscite be completed before engaging in any further formal/informal discussions (in particular before committing to any proposed tri-party agreement); and that the completion of this plebiscite be made a condition of any municipal funding contribution.

## Rationale

### City of Calgary Plebiscite

In November 2018 the province of Alberta stipulated that the City of Calgary had to initiate a plebiscite to decide the hosting of the 2026 Winter Olympic Games, as a condition of provincial funding support. The results saw 56.4% of Calgarians voting “NO” to hosting the 2026 Winter Olympic Games when asked the simple question – *“are you for or are you against Calgary hosting the 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games”?*

### Commentary

A recent Hamilton Spectator article stated that Bruce Kidd (a professor of sport and public policy at the University of Toronto, winner of the Lou Marsh Trophy in 1961, Gold medalist at the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games, Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame inductee in 1966, Canadian Sports Hall of Fame inductee in 1968 and in 2004 was awarded the Order of Canada) hit the nail on the head with his comments that **“no games should go ahead without broad public support”** and **“in fact, a plebiscite should be held to decide the matter”**. His opinion is echoed by Jules Boykoff, Pacific University and an expert in economics who stated that **“any proposal to host international sporting events should be put to a community vote”**.

### Public Opinion Poll

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, two online polls appeared on social media related to the subject of hosting the Commonwealth Games.

#### *Poll One*

*Question Asked: “Do you think that Hamilton should be hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2026 at a \$1 billion price tag”?*

**Yes – 10.5%**

**No – 77.2%**

**Undecided – 12.3%**

#### *Poll Two*

*Question Asked: “After 2026 Commonwealth Games pitch today at council, do you”:*

**Support it – 8.1%**

**Oppose it – 82.9%**

**Want more information – 9%**

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider this request.

Sincerely,

*Kevin Gonci.*

Mr. Kevin Gonci, CD  
City of Hamilton resident  
(Ward 14 Constituent)