

**Pilon, Janet**

---

**Subject:** Chedoke Estate (1 Balfour Dr.) – Council May 25th

**From:** Sarah Sheehan

**Sent:** May 24, 2022 11:59 AM

**To:** [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)

**Subject:** Chedoke Estate (1 Balfour Dr.) – Council May 25th

Mr. Mayor, respected Councillors:

I'm writing to you to strenuously object to the proposed 17-year lease to the current bidder, as part of the sole-sourced, unsolicited bid.

This is a poor deal for the citizens of Hamilton and for Ontarians, for a number of reasons:

1. The bidder would get Chedoke rent-free. This is not customary for commercial leases, where tenants make capital investments and pay commercial rent.
2. Public access would be restricted to weekdays before 4 p.m., until 2039 — severely limiting access to a building that is publicly owned, and was generously given to the public by the donor. It's just too important to be put in private hands.
3. With Chedoke, transparency and timing of meetings (during COVID and Grey Cup Week) have presented serious difficulties for public engagement. The ward councillor was on leave for much of the process.
4. Since the unsolicited, sole-sourced bid in 2019, the city has been reactive — rather than developing its own, proactive vision for Chedoke. There are plenty of lovely, privately owned properties in the area. The proposed use, which would close the property for 17 years, isn't a good fit for a publicly owned venue.
5. For such an incredible potential visitors' attraction, privatizing Chedoke would be a missed opportunity.
6. Forgone revenue is another unknown. Some quick calculations suggest this property could generate significantly more revenue via events. Compare the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, a heritage property that generates substantial revenue as an event space. Enoch Turner is a much smaller property, but can earn up to about approx. \$1.5 M per year in event revenue, from weddings alone — the same in a single year as the entire 17-year investment by the current bidder.

Chedoke is an inspiring place that all Hamiltonians and Ontarians deserve access to. Let's keep Chedoke public.

Regards,

—Dr. Sarah Sheehan

**References:**

Star print edition: "Access for all to heritage properties" (May 23, 2022, A13) | online: "[Everyone deserves access to our Ontario Heritage Trust properties. Let's keep Chedoke public](https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2022/05/23/everyone-deserves-access-to-our-ontario-heritage-trust-properties-lets-keep-chedoke-public.html)"  
<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2022/05/23/everyone-deserves-access-to-our-ontario-heritage-trust-properties-lets-keep-chedoke-public.html>



Everyone deserves access to our  
Ontario Heritage Trust properties. Let's  
keep Chedoke public | The Star

Chedoke is Hamilton's last great escarpment estate. This week, councillors are set to ratify a proposal to lease it for private use.

[www.thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com)

Sincerely,  
Dr. Sarah Sheehan