

# CITY OF HAMILTON

## MOTION

Emergency and Community Services Committee: May 7, 2026

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR T. JACKSON .....**

**SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR .....**

**Operating and Maintenance Agreement for Bernie Arbour Stadium with Spear Sports Group Inc. (Majority owner Hamilton Cardinals Baseball Club) (Ward 6):**

WHEREAS, Bernie Arbour Stadium is a City-owned outdoor baseball facility within the Mohawk Sports Park Complex located in Ward 6, and is one of Hamilton’s premier recreational sports assets with significant historical and community value;

WHEREAS, The Recreation Master Plan (2022) recommends assessing operating budget implications and partnership options prior to approving major capital projects as an alternative approach to address the funding gap;

WHEREAS, Bernie Arbour Stadium has served as the home of the Hamilton Cardinals of the Intercounty Baseball League (IBL) since its construction in 1970, providing recreational, amateur, and semi-professional baseball opportunities to Hamilton residents;

WHEREAS, the Hamilton Cardinals IBL team has new ownership with a renewed vision for investment in the facility and long-term community engagement;

WHEREAS, the new ownership group has expressed a commitment to undertaking ongoing maintenance of the field starting in the 2027 season, investing in upgrades to the stadium infrastructure and amenities, providing community access, and improving the overall fan and community experience;

WHEREAS, precedent has been established in other municipalities where the operation of major baseball facilities has successfully transitioned from municipal staff to established baseball organizations;

WHEREAS, the current operating agreement between the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Cardinals organization is set to expire, and a new agreement is required to enable long-term planning, operations, and capital investment;

WHEREAS, the Recreation Master Plan (2022) recommends the regular review of agreements with third party operators that have dedicated access to facilities to ensure an appropriate and sustainable distribution of operational and financial responsibilities;

WHEREAS, the reduced maintenance responsibilities realized by the City through this agreement will allow for a reduction in seasonal maintenance staff and a commensurate reduction in the operating budget of the Public Works Department;

WHEREAS, it is in the City's interest to provide certainty for both the team and the facility through a renewed and extended agreement that aligns with community benefit and stewardship of City assets;

WHEREAS, the sale of advertising within Bernie Arbour Stadium provides a viable revenue source to support the maintenance and sustainability of the stadium;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the City of Hamilton enter into an Operating and Maintenance Agreement with Spear Sports Group, Inc. (majority owner of the Hamilton Cardinals Professional Baseball Club) for Bernie Arbour Stadium for a ten-year term, with two optional extension terms of five years each;
- (b) That the Operating and Maintenance Agreement include provisions for routine maintenance of the field and mutually agreed upon facility upgrades and capital investment commitments by the Spear Sports Group, Inc.;
- (c) That the City of Hamilton include the sale of advertising rights within Bernie Arbour Stadium as part of the Operating and Maintenance Agreement to offset a portion of the cost associated with the annual maintenance, operations and capital improvement of the facility;
- (d) That the Operating and Maintenance Agreement include provisions that the Spear Sports Group, Inc. commit to providing meaningful and consistent community access to the facility for the purposes of supporting high level amateur sport; and,
- (e) That the General Manager, Healthy and Safe Communities Department, be authorized and directed to execute an Operating and Maintenance Agreement with the Spear Sports Group, Inc. (majority owner of the Hamilton Cardinals IBL Team), together with any ancillary documents to allow the ongoing use of City property in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.