



BURLINGTON VINTAGE BASEBALL

January 22, 2006

Re: **General Brock Public Park Site**

City of Burlington Staff & General Brock Park Committee:

City Staff and members of the Committee, thank you for giving us the opportunity to present testimony to the General Brock Park public open house. I would ask that my testimony be made part of the official record of this meeting.

Burlington Vintage Baseball (hereinafter, BVB) is a non-profit adult (30+) vintage baseball league. We have been a part of the city of Burlington sports community for the last 6 years under the BVB name. The league is comprised of approximately 160 players from the Southern Ontario region, mostly local within Burlington, ranging from 30 to 60 years of age. Please reference the Burlington Vintage Baseball webpage for further information. <http://www.bvbbaseball.com>.

Our teams play competitive hardball at local Burlington senior baseball fields (Nelson Park, Millcroft Park & Ireland Park). Our league teams also participate in regional, national and locally hosted tournaments against other Vintage baseball teams or leagues from all over Ontario. In addition, the BVB League participates in road trip opportunities such as our successful *Cooperstown NY USA* tournament in 2004, where a group of our League teams played exhibition games at *Doubleday Field...*"where it all began." In 2005, BVB sent two teams to the Canadian National Vintage Championships hosted that year in Tillsonburg, Ontario. The tournament is hosted in different locations throughout Canada, drawing many teams from all over the country. To say the least, we love the game of baseball.

Our presence in the community is also associated with local sponsors and businesses. Their relationship to the league is an important part of our membership to the league and the community.

That being said, BVB is well vested in the local sports community in Burlington. When we were informed of the development options for the General Brock Park space, we thought it appropriate to respond with comments and suggestions from our viewpoint.

BVB plays approximately 125 games at local park diamonds through the spring to fall months. We continue to work towards growing our league body by adding players, teams and local game or tournament events. Unfortunately, growth potential is hampered in part by senior

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baseball diamond/park availability. We are limited to the previously mentioned Burlington Park facilities due to the type of field and facilities required (pitching mound and lights). This is in comparison to the approximately 65 softball & junior baseball diamonds under the management of the Burlington Parks & Recreation department. Although we are not aware of the availability or demands for softball or junior baseball diamonds by other city organizations or leagues, the ratio of diamond types is unequal. Please reference the following for a listing of Burlington Park types... <http://cms.burlington.ca/English/Sports-Fields.html> .

Over the last number of years, senior baseball diamonds have been removed or converted to softball or junior baseball diamonds such as diamond facilities at Sherwood Forest Park in East Burlington. The select groups of senior baseball diamonds in Burlington are shared with other large organized baseball leagues or associations. To name a few:

Burlington Organized Minor Baseball Association (BOMBA)
Lakeshore Baseball League
Burlington BRANTS Baseball team from the Central Ontario Baseball Association (COBA).

Working with the City of Burlington Parks Department every year, our board officials are provided park availability in accordance to the date/times required but, this is limited due to the priority of selection and availability of facilities by the previously mentioned baseball leagues. Removing the diamonds at General Brock Park will only increase the competition for available parks in Burlington, thus possibly affecting BVB's scheduling situation further.

The two baseball diamonds at General Brock Park are not presently used by BVB for they are not suitable to be used for an organized senior baseball league but, BVB would like to table a suggestion to the Committee. Additional baseball facilities would assist with providing opportunity for BVB to grow into the direction that it desires and something better for the entire community. Our proposal is to have the City of Burlington update the fields with the type of diamond and facilities required (pitching mound and lights) to host local baseball senior league play. It will provide immediate relieve to the lack of park availability that we have experienced. It would also provide opportunity for BVB, and possibly other baseball leagues, to expand their presence in the Burlington sports community through additional games, teams and events.

If our suggestion or request is a possible option, BVB would like to be a part of this development. With the foundation of our player membership and the businesses and sponsors we represent, opportunities to develop an assisted venture could be a possibility.

We do not wish to occupy this entire statement with a baseball centric viewpoint. The members of BVB are opposed to the reduction of any sports or park facilities in the Burlington area. The loss of green space at General Brock could be a significant loss of space for sports activities of many kinds and for many age groups.

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Our members and their family members play a multitude of other sports that require city parks to facilitate such activities. This is especially true for the youth of Burlington. Sport and recreational play has continued to be a large part of our younger members of this community. To name just a few, this is displayed in the baseball, hockey, football and soccer programs and organizations throughout the city. Those organizations have helped our youth build a foundation for life skills as they move to adulthood. To further state the pride of our community, Burlington sports organizations have produced some world class athletes who have gone on to compete in major sports establishments (NHL, CFL, NFL, MLB, Olympic Games, etc). We can not disregard the need for sports and recreational facilities in our community.

Please do not disperse the General Brock Park site to any other options outside of improving upon its present Park and Recreation use within the community. The youth of today and tomorrow will lose out in the end.

If you require any further details about the points provided or our Burlington Vintage Baseball League, do not hesitate contacting us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Hambrook". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

Jim Hambrook

BVB President

**cc: Jason Riesberry
President – Lakeshore Baseball League.**

cc: BVB Board of Executives

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