



# MCCAULEY RINK

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT



PETER GOLDRING

The outdoor ice rink is part of our heritage, a part that is increasingly vanishing. Inner-city Edmonton only has one full-size outdoor rink, one that was threatened with closure until Peter Goldring intervened.

## MCCAULEY RINK - AN EDMONTON JEWEL

As communities grow and become more densely populated, the need for recreation and sports facilities grows as well. Pete Goldring thinks we should be very supportive of and encouraging towards existing, publicly-owned sports facilities. These facilities allow our communities to be more closely-knit and serve as a focus of community involvement.

In 1999 a social housing group wanted to tear down and replace the McCauley rink and hall to make way for a 20-unit social

housing development and community centre which would house various social agencies. Those promoting this housing development wanted the city to support their project by donating the land for the development, providing parking exemptions and probably exemptions from residential property taxes. A much smaller skating rink would be built, less than 30% of the size of the existing McCauley hockey rink, which then could not be used for hockey.



**McCauley Rink is an important focus point for residents of the Boyle - McCauley Community. While the full-size hockey rink was saved, the hall beside it, with washrooms etc., was unfortunately removed.**

The loss of the rink, which is paved and can be used for ball hockey in the summer, would have been a blow to the community. It was home to, among others, the Skid Row Dogz, a championship ball hockey team that represented Canada in the world championships in Florida. None of these inner-city players had played organized hockey in

their youth, and without the McCauley Rink would not have been able to discover this passion.



As a Member of Parliament Peter Goldring was appalled at this callous social-centric takeover attempt that had no support in the community. He felt it was important to save the hockey rink as it is the only such facility in the area and spoke out against the social housing group's plans, receiving considerable community support.

That upset some supporters of the plan, who came to Mr. Goldring's office and threatened they would work against him in the upcoming nomination and election if he didn't back down. Mr. Goldring persevered and the rink was saved. It is still a community magnet in all seasons as skaters use it in cold weather and warm for skating, hockey and ball hockey.



**Peter Goldring has long encouraged outdoor sporting activities and worked hard to prevent the McCauley Rink, the only full-size outdoor rink in the area, from being demolished and replaced by housing.**

Community athletic facilities, along with schools and houses of worship, form the heart of a neighbourhood. Whether we are having fun with our friends, spending time with our family or enjoying solitary recreation, exercise is a completely positive use of time. Community support is generally fairly easy to come by for most endeavours that clearly benefit a community.

Edmontonians should pause and reflect on how important outdoor rinks are as a clear and cost-effective alternative to very busy indoor arena rinks. There are only 34 indoor arenas in the city, compared to about 100 outdoor rinks run by the different community leagues. Public skating at an indoor arena is limited (although to its credit the city does provide the ice time without charging skaters a fee) and frequently can require travel to the arena.

For those willing to skate outdoors there is probably a rink within easy walking distance.

Throughout Edmonton, the waiting lists at standard enclosed rinks are extensive. Available times for games are often only at odd or late hours, due to demand far exceeding a residential area's supply. While ice

time on indoor rinks is in short supply, high energy costs have escalated overall costs dramatically, compared to outdoor community rinks. Few would find fault with the statement that an hour of skating in the outdoor air is generally healthier than an hour of post-Zamboni rink time, particularly for children. From both health and cost considerations, is it not time to take another look at our outdoor rinks, to ensure that these facilities are being utilized by our communities as well as they might?



Many of us have fond memories of outdoor hockey. In Peter Goldring's case, it was at the family pond, where after a quick check for ice thickness (the pond could be eight feet deep) followed by snow clearing Mr. Goldring, his brother and neighbouring boys would play pickup hockey - shinny. Back then, in the early 50's, there were no helmets, face masks, pads, equipment of any kind except skates, sticks and a puck, and a shovel to clear the ice. Playing on an outdoor rink is playing the game under the open sky, despite the wind and the cold. Skating sports, be they individual or team-based, are a great physical release for energetic children and adults. In addition, lessons learned through team playing contribute to a child's development and character and to an appreciation of one of life's most important lessons: success comes more easily through team cooperation and team effort.

That this is still possible at the McCauley rink is because of the intervention of Peter Goldring in 1999, someone who recognized the value of the rink to the community and realized also that there are many places in the community where new social housing could have been built that wouldn't have re-

quired the destruction of the rink. At times social housing advocates lose touch with the reality of the communities they are trying to serve, and it would certainly appear that was true in this case.

The McCauley Community League is to be commended for their efforts to keep the rink open and to find the volunteers necessary to shovel snow and perform the other tasks necessary to keep the rink operating throughout the year.



**Edmonton's Skid Row Dogz ball hockey team used McCauley Rink as their home base. Thanks to Peter's support the rink was saved and the Dogz able to participate in the World championships in Florida.**

One of the highlights of the rink year is the now annual McCauley Cup where beat officers from Edmonton Police Service's Downtown Division take on McCauley community youth in a game of shinny. This gives area youth positive interaction with the police, is good for the

children and the community as a whole. There are free hot dogs and hot chocolate – it has become a true community event. An event such as this allows stereotypes to be broken, for the benefit of the community.

To have permanently deprived the Edmonton downtown community of a full-size recreational hockey rink--a facility on which to practice our national sport would have been short-sighted and regressive. As with much "redevelopment", the social costs associ-

ated with unwarranted changes only become appreciated in hindsight. Sometimes needs become blurred with wants by well-meaning promoters of worthwhile social causes. The end result is generally significant, yet avoidable, additional costs to taxpayers.

Community Leagues are always looking for volunteers to help out with their programs. To get in touch with your local community league go to the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues website at [www.efcl.org](http://www.efcl.org).

**Update:** Due to the continued efforts of people like Dan Glugosh, McCauley Rink is a success. Please volunteer and contribute to help their future.

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*This brochure series is intended to highlight special issues that Member of Parliament, Peter Goldring, has been involved in. If you wish to comment, please take a moment to fill out the survey below, write or call to the address above.*

**Your Opinion Matters...**

Do you think it is important to have a full-size outdoor rink in the McCauley community?

Yes

No

Should more be done to encourage young people to get involved in outdoor sporting activities?

Yes

No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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