

Re: **Ridgetown Arena – Girl's Dressing Room**

As we are sure you are aware, the East Kent Memorial Arena (Ridgetown) had a girl's dressing room, which was comparable to the boy's dressing rooms, complete with benches, hooks, washroom, and shower. It was located in the same area as the other dressing rooms, which is in a safe and secluded area which is meant for players, coaches and officials. Members of the public, as a general rule, do not enter this area. It accommodated up to ten girls and their equipment. There was only one such dressing room, which created some difficulties when both teams had female players or back-to-back time slots had female players. While not ideal, with the cooperation of the teams and the female players, it was adequate. However, that room was leased to a Chatham Cyclones AAA Hockey Team. As a result, there is no longer a proper dressing room for female players.

At first, in order to address this deficiency, Chatham Kent Facility Services created a room in the front stairwell which opens directly off the lobby. This space was approximately six feet by eight feet. It did not include either a washroom or shower. It included four chairs; and accommodated three girls at a time. When the door was opened to allow another girl to enter, half the room was visible to members of the public in the lobby, and notably by men leaving the men's room which is located approximately 10 feet away.

As a result of public pressure relating to the inadequacy and inappropriateness of this room, Chatham Kent Facility Services converted the handicapped washroom to a girl's dressing room. This room is also visible to members of the public when they are watching games. This room does contain a washroom, but still does not contain a shower; and still only accommodates three girls. It is also located on the opposite side of the Arena, so the female players are significantly separated from their teams, requiring them to walk through the lobby among the public to join their teammates and participate in team activities. Additionally, the women's public washroom no longer has a door, in order to accommodate wheelchair access.

It is our position that the room currently used by female players is neither adequate nor appropriate. It is also extremely inequitable. In fact, complaints and concerns have been received by the South Kent Minor Hockey Board from players, parents, and coaches regarding the girl's dressing room. Copies of such letters are enclosed for your reference.

Pursuant to the Ontario Hockey Federation, South Kent Minor Hockey is required to ensure all dressing room spaces and procedures are safe, inclusive, and equitable by anticipating and removing all barriers to participation. Furthermore, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent and South Kent Minor Hockey are bound by the *Human Rights Code*. Section 1 of the *Code*, states, "Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability."

The Ontario Hockey Federation gives consideration to limitations of facilities, where there are limited dressing rooms. The Human Rights Commission may give similar consideration. However, in the current

situation, the issue is not with the Facility, but rather the actions of the Municipality. By leasing the girl's dressing room to a Chatham Cyclones AAA Hockey Team, the municipality has created the situation where the female players are treated inequitably. Their efforts to create a substitute dressing room have exacerbated the situation by creating additional inequities.

As a result, the South Kent Minor Hockey Board hereby requests that Chatham-Kent reinstate access to the original girl's dressing room for use by parties who rent the ice at the East Kent Memorial Arena, in order to restore safety, security, dignity and equality to female players.

Yours Truly,

SOUTH KENT MINOR HOCKEY BOARD

Per:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shawn Allen', is written over a horizontal line.

Shawn Allen

South Kent Minor Hockey President

Encl.