

**For Immediate Release****Ombudsman Finds Governance Gaps at City Arena**

**Toronto – November 7th, 2013.** The City of Toronto Ombudsman has found sloppy procedures and governance in the awarding of an advertising contract at the Leaside Arena.

Fiona Crean today released her report “*Skating on Thin Ice: an Investigation into Governance at an Arena Board.*” The Ombudsman began her investigation after a resident complained the arena’s Board of Management had treated him unfairly.

The complainant, who had advertised on the arena’s Zamboni for a decade, said he had been given only a week to match what was described as a firm offer from another business that was willing to pay seven times more for the space on an annual basis.

The Ombudsman’s investigation found that:

- The Board of Management misrepresented the competing bid. It was not firm, and did not require \$125,000 as an upfront payment. \$75,000 of the bid was to be a donation, and only \$50,000 was for advertising (a 10-year contract for space on the Zamboni).
- The Board of Management had been in discussion with the rival bidder for four months before telling the complainant that he could lose his advertising contract.
- The email cancelling the complainant’s contract was sent a week before the cancellation was approved by the Board of Management.

“It’s clear the complainant was not treated fairly,” says Ombudsman Fiona Crean. “There was no transparency in the awarding the new advertising contract and the communication with the complainant was totally inadequate.”

Crean says systemic problems at the Board of Management were at the root of the complainant’s problems. “The Board did not have adequate policies for managing advertising, sponsorship or procurement, and did not follow the requirements laid out in the Relationship Framework that governs its interaction with the City of Toronto. As well, Board meetings were sometimes not conducted transparently.”

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The Ombudsman has made 18 recommendations to improve the governance of the Leaside Arena. They include the development of basic policies and governance training of the Board of Management. Fiona Crean has also asked the City Manager to examine alternative governance models for City Council's consideration.

The Ombudsman recommended the Chair of the Board of Management of the Leaside Arena apologize to the complainant for his treatment, and is pleased to report that has been done.

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Download a fully copy of the report by the City of Toronto Ombudsman, "Skating on Thin Ice – an Investigation into Governance at an Arena." at [www.ombudstoronto.ca](http://www.ombudstoronto.ca)

**For more information or to arrange interviews, contact:**

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*Toronto's Ombudsman is an impartial and independent officer of City Council, providing an appeal of last resort for people who feel they have been adversely affected by a decision, act or omission of City Administration. The Ombudsman also undertakes investigations into systemic problems that cause equitable, substantive and procedural unfairness in City administration.*