

Madalyn Letellier

From: Brenton Stewart [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 5:57 PM
To: All City Council; Public Comments
Cc: SYHA Board
Subject: Make Founders Rink available for ice sports over the winter months
Attachments: B.Stewart_Email to city councilors regarding Founders.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Councilors,

I am the president of the Somerville Youth Hockey Association (SYHA), a local non-profit that serves the community and is run entirely by volunteers. We serve 278 youths participating in our programming and are supported by 28 coaches and 9 board members. Our program costs to families are some of the lowest in Massachusetts. On top of that, we aim to offer our players frequent and consistent practices—often more than other nearby programs. In addition to serving youths, 42 women, often mothers of SYHA players as well as local community members, participate in our increasingly popular Women’s Learn to Play program. To best serve our SYHA community and continue to grow, I am requesting your support to bring ice back to Founders Memorial Rink next year. This rink is a vital asset to the community and SYHA, allowing us to provide special programming and events, throughout the season.

SYHA prioritizes equity; we’ve established recruitment and retention goals that target female participants as well as low-income families. Historically, these two groups have not been afforded equal access to the sport of hockey and SYHA has implemented programming and strategies to best support these populations. This year, 11.5% of our travel team players required financial aid in order to play on a team; 17.5% of our Learn to Skate/Learn to Play Hockey program required financial aid in order to participate in this learning program primarily serving players ages 3-8 years old; and 30.8% of our Learn to Play Hockey 9+ program required financial aid in order to participate in this learning program that primarily serves players ages 9-18 years old. Additionally, our female participation has increased year over year:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Travel Teams (Mites-U8 to Bantams-U14)	11	14	20	23	16
Advanced Learn to Play Hockey (ages 9-18)	0	3	7	8	10
LTS/LTPH (ages 3-8)	10	31	34	53	64
Total	21	48	61	84	90

In the past, our special events that celebrate women in sports, such as our Girls of Somerville Hockey, or family special events used to fundraise to support our financial scholarships were held at Founders rink.

Many of these events were held monthly but had to be cut back or removed entirely due to not having access to ice on Founders this year. We were only able to hold two Girls Only hockey events this year and teams relinquished their practice times to support such events.

Starting in the 2022-2023 season, SYHA worked with other local town programs to develop the details needed to run a Mites (under 8) jamboree at Founders rink. We had agreements in place with other youth hockey organizations to run a youth showcase, a fundraising event, that enables our youngest skaters the opportunity to experience tournament-style competition in a fun and safe environment. Those plans and the day's event had to be cancelled due to not having Founders available.

Somerville High School Boys Varsity team also practices at Veterans Memorial and their programming takes priority over non-profit youth programming. We value this prioritization, as many of our players grow up to compete at the high school level. However, this prioritization comes at the expense of SYHA's players. Due to their games, SYHA consistently loses 4 hours of ice time each week throughout the months of late November through mid-March. In the past, we could navigate these conflicts due to home games by holding practices at Founders Rink. But this year, we simply had to cancel practice, with some teams not having a practice scheduled for the entire week (our youngest players are not able to practice in the later time slots based on dinner and bedtime routines).

SYHA provides a valuable service, teaching youths to skate and compete on a team. The benefits of athletics and playing team sports are widely known and it's SYHA's mission to grow the game of hockey. Based on our recent efforts, we anticipate adding two additional teams' worth of players to SYHA's program next year. We currently do not have enough ice time available to support the additional programming that would be required to serve these additional players. Furthermore, efforts to establish a Girls Middle School intramural program, in partnership with Somerville Rec and Somerville Public Schools could not be piloted and implemented without access to the ice at Founders.

Having ice at Founders Rink is critical to support the mission and programming of SYHA. The local hockey community already feels squeezed by the financial pressures of outside forces, such as the privatization or closures of rinks, and competing with for-profit youth club hockey programs for use of ice time. Losing Founders Rink this past year had a detrimental impact on SYHA and, more importantly, the broader community, but stunting our ability to grow and support the needs of local youths.

Please do all that you can to bring back ice to Founders Rink.

Sincerely,

Brenton Stewart

Somerville Youth Hockey Association, President

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Somerville, MA 02143

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**Brenton Stewart**, President  
Somerville Youth Hockey



To: Councilor Burnley, Councilor Mbah, Councilor Strezo, Councilor Wilson, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Scott, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Sait, Councilor Davis, and Councilor Pineda Neufeld

From: Brenton Stewart, President of Somerville Youth Hockey Association  
16 Oxford Street, Somerville, MA 02143 (Ward 3 resident)

Subject: Make Founders Rink available for ice sports over the winter months

Dear Councilors,

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|----------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Travel Teams<br>(Mites-U8 to Bantams-U14)    | 11        | 14        | 20        | 23        | 16        |
| Advanced Learn to Play<br>Hockey (ages 9-18) | 0         | 3         | 7         | 8         | 10        |
| LTS/LTPH (ages 3-8)                          | 10        | 31        | 34        | 53        | 64        |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>21</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>61</b> | <b>84</b> | <b>90</b> |

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detrimental impact on SYHA and, more importantly, the broader community, but stunting our ability to grow and support the needs of local youths.

Please do all that you can to bring back ice to Founders Rink.

Sincerely,

Brenton Stewart

Somerville Youth Hockey Association, President

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], Somerville, MA 02143

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Melissa Gillespie <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2025 7:07 PM  
**To:** Public Comments  
**Subject:** Urging the City to Restore the Ice at Founders Rink

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Good Afternoon Naima,

My name is Melissa Gillespie, and my son has been involved in hockey in Somerville for 4 years. Founders Rink provided valuable extra practice and development opportunities for our kids, but with the city's decision to remove the ice sheet, we have lost critical practice time and youth programming.

Due to scheduling conflicts with the high school varsity team, there have been weeks when my child had no practice at all. This could have been avoided if the city had maintained the ice sheet at Founders during the winter months.

We urge the city to reinstate the ice at Founders. The proposal to use the space as a recreation center in the summer and fall does not need to come at the expense of winter programming. By installing modular flooring, the facility could serve both purposes—accommodating warm-weather activities while still supporting hockey and ice-skating families in the winter. Our kids' needs matter just as much in the colder months as they do in the summer. I urge you to vote NO on the permanent flooring and help us get ice back at Founders.

The community needs this ice. The city must prioritize equitable access to winter sports and restore the ice at Founders Rink.

Sincerely,

Melissa and Jeremy Gillespie, [REDACTED]

Ward 5

## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** Rozanne Puleo [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2025 7:26 PM  
**To:** Public Comments  
**Subject:** Fwd: FOUNDERS RINK

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

My name is Roz Puleo, and I'm a parent of two children who have been actively involved in hockey for the past three years. While I appreciate the proposal to use the Founders Rink space as a teen community center, I strongly urge you to retain the ability to provide ice at the rink during the winter season.

**On Thursday, March 27, please vote against the installation of permanent flooring at Founders.** Instead, I respectfully request that you advocate for **modular flooring**, which would allow the space to support year-round programming. This compromise would enable the facility to host community activities in the warmer months without eliminating vital winter programming like hockey and public skating.

The building is simply too cold in the winter to serve as a functional indoor space without ice. Leaving it empty during those months would not only be a loss for the community but also a missed revenue opportunity for the city. By reinstating the ice at Founders during the winter season, the city can continue to support the many families who rely on this facility for youth sports and recreation.

The proposal to convert the space into a recreation center for summer and fall use **does not need to come at the expense of winter activities**. Modular flooring offers a flexible solution that meets the needs of all community members—ensuring our kids have opportunities for healthy, active engagement throughout the entire year.

Please consider the full impact of this decision. Our children's needs don't stop when the seasons change. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Thank you - Roz Puleo



## Madalyn Letellier

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**From:** cheri ruane <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 31, 2025 7:41 PM  
**To:** Public Comments  
**Subject:** Finance Committee Meeting - Recreation Hub at Founder's Rink

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Hello,

I'm writing with hearty support for the expansion of programming at the Founder's Rink to include a new flooring system that will facilitate multi-generational activities for all residents throughout the whole year.

This is a huge opportunity for the city to leverage an existing facility that is currently underutilized. A flooring system that can be installed for court games and community events and then removed should there be demand for ice in the winter is an excellent use of city funds and will impact the quality of life for many many people for years to come.

This is an opportunity for a place for teens after school, camps in the summer and over school vacations, and leagues for adults to meet their neighbors while getting exercise.

While I understand there are concerns around limiting the ability to have ice in this facility in the winter, I believe a flexible solution that allows for that possibility is the right answer.

Please support this project and consider that for a few dollar per resident, we can have a truly wonderful active recreation hub that will serve our entire community now and into the future.

Thank you,  
Cheri Ruane  
[REDACTED]