



# WEST LORNE MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

171 Graham Road, West Lorne, ON N0L 2P0  
info@westlornecomets.com

August 13, 2024

Municipality of West Elgin  
22413 Hoskins Line  
Rodney, ON N0L 2C0

Attention: West Elgin Arena Board

West Lorne Minor Hockey (WLMH) is an organized youth hockey association under the umbrella of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association, and we are proud to call West Elgin Arena the home of the Comets. WLMH registers players primarily from the Municipality of West Elgin and Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich. Our organization is the only minor hockey option for the youth of both municipalities to participate in. We offer local league, representative (competitive), and in-house hockey options to ensure all the youth of the community can access hockey.

West Lorne Minor Hockey (WLMH) is one of the major users of the West Elgin Arena. In 2023/2024, WLMH represented 60% of the total rented ice hours at the area, with 25.5 hours of the total 43 rented hours being under WLMH's ice time.

Historically, and up until 2020, WLMH ice hours included the following:

- Sundays
- Tuesdays
- Thursdays
- Fridays
- Saturdays

In 2021, due to COVID provincial restrictions, hockey could only be run in-house in West Lorne with no league play or formal games. During this time, WLMH ice hours were reduced, as many families did not register for hockey with the uncertainty of what the season would look like with potential shutdowns as outbreaks continued.

During this time, the Tuesday night 5PM - 6:30 PM ice slot that was historically secured by WLMH for over 10+ years was contracted to another minor hockey organization with the promise it would be returned to WLMH. It was not.

In 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, WLMH formally requested municipal staff return the 5:00PM - 6:30PM ice time back to WLMH. These requests have been denied.

As we were not able to recover this ice time, WLMH has been using creative solutions for the past three (3) seasons to make ice times work - which has included shared practices for teams, running later practices into the night for 9 & 10 year olds, and starting practices right at 5PM. None of these solutions are perfect, but we were left with no other option when our requests were denied.

We can no longer ask our families to sacrifice because an out of town organization takes priority over the children of West Elgin and Dutton/Dunwich. Our registration numbers have been growing with the community, and we need extra hours of ice.

We are faced with two options: 1) to ask for the Tuesday night ice time back, or 2) seek renting ice hours in another arena in another community. We do not want to seek ice contracts in other arenas. We want our West Lorne Comets to have a home in their home arena.

Therefore, ***please accept this letter and delegation as the formal request to return the Tuesday night 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM ice slot back to West Lorne Minor Hockey.***

As of August 13th, 2024, no ice contracts for the upcoming season have been signed, so the Municipality is at no risk contractually to return this slot to WLMH.

To return this ice time to WLMH is at no financial risk to the Municipality, as WLMH will be paying for the 5PM - 6:30 PM slot, which means there will be no finances lost.

If there is a concern that WLMH will someday not need this ice time again - this is not the case. Our ice needs are continuing to grow, and WLMH will be asking for even more ice hours in 2025/2026 in order to keep our ice times in West Lorne.

### **Seasonal Ice User Policy**

In terms of ensuring the decision to return the ice to WLMH is aligned with the Seasonal Ice User Policy - Under Ice Allocation Policy - Defining Minor Times - the policy states:

*Prime time ice is defined as:*

*Monday to Friday 5:00pm to 11:00pm*

*Saturday 8:00am to 11:00pm*

*Sunday 8:00am to 11:00pm*

*These hours are to be allocated for minor programs except in the following situations:*

- *When a group or club has rented ice time for at least two consecutive years. They shall receive first consideration for the use of the same ice time the following year.*
- *When the facility supervisor determines that it is appropriate to provide ice time for a particular program because of a special need.*

Pursuant to this policy - the organization that secured Tuesday 5PM ice meets the definition of a minor sport group. Therefore, reallocating this ice to West Lorne Minor Hockey will not violate the Seasonal Ice Policy, as both groups are minor sports organizations. To clarify, based on this policy, the exceptions (two consecutive years) do not apply as both organizations are minor sports groups. Simply put, the contract has been awarded to a minor group based out of Komoka over a minor group based out of West Elgin & Dutton/Dunwich.

Under *Historical Precedent* in the Seasonal Ice User Policy:

*It will be a principle of the allocation system to give due consideration to the allocation of ice according to previous years. Significant changes to previous year's ice shall be based on changes to registration levels, registration composition or to emerging needs.*

This policy allows changes to the historical ice allocation to be made when there are changes in registration levels, and WLMH has significant changes in our registration levels.

We are simply asking for the West Elgin Arena Board to prioritize the youth of Dutton/Dunwich and West Elgin over an outside group.

Lastly, by returning this ice to West Lorne Minor Hockey, the Council and the Municipality of West Elgin will have demonstrated the importance of the youth of our community.

Thank you,

*Jessica Small*

Jessica Small  
President  
West Lorne Minor Hockey Association

*Kevin Summers*

Kevin Summers  
Past-President  
West Lorne Minor Hockey