



February 23, 2022

An open letter to Fort Dupont Ice Arena's valued skaters, clients, employees, supporters, and other interested parties from the Fort Dupont Board of Directors:

Last week, we received some surprising and devastating news from the District of Columbia. This development came on the cusp of what we all hoped would be a celebration of an exciting transition to construction of a new, modern ice rink — in the same location as our well-loved, but well-worn, facility.

Instead, District officials conveyed information that has led us to conclude that we cannot allow the current rink to be torn down at this time. The information also raises concerns about whether DC residents can have confidence that their tax dollars would be spent wisely and appropriately under the City's current construction plan.

In a nutshell, Board members learned last week that the District's construction plan would cost more than twice as much as the project's initial cost estimates 10 years ago, while covering only one sheet of ice, instead of two, as originally plan.

The proposed \$37,500,000 price tag, about \$700 per square foot, is comparable to the cost of a luxury New York City skyscraper!

Equally troubling, the 12-18 month timeline we were promised to complete the new facility has now been extended to at least 27 months. Members of our Board of Directors with national experience in rink construction, maintenance, and management know that the District's latest construction plan costs far more and would take far longer to build than the typical one-sheet ice arena. We will be getting half the project for twice the cost.

Unfortunately, we aren't able to fully evaluate how and why the District-approved plan is so significantly beyond reasonable industry practices — in fact, five to six times what we believe the cost should be — because officials will not share the construction budget with us. Budget transparency would help our experts identify ways the new rink could be built more cost-effectively and quickly, thereby getting kids back on the ice through our nationally-recognized Kids On Ice programs as soon as possible.

These unexplained cost and timeline changes have caused us to question whether a new rink will ever be built once the current one is demolished. Our unwavering commitment to the children and families throughout the city and to our mission of affording opportunity and access to ice sports for all kids, regardless of economic circumstances, does not allow us to take that chance.

In 2019, after successfully defeating the city's attempt to de-fund the new rink, we entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the city confirming the final terms under which the city would construct a new, 2-rink arena. The parties agreed to work together to lower the current costs associated with the construction of the 2-rink facility. Those were the two key terms of the agreement — and, equally important, mutual goals: lower the costs for a 2-rink facility and include Fort Dupont as a partner.

Fort Dupont has not been afforded a substantive role in the process. For example, even after the intervention of Chairman Mendelson, the city has never provided Fort Dupont with a complete budget to review for comments and suggestions. Instead of reducing costs, the District has increased them.

Given these facts, the Fort Dupont Board of Directors, without a dissenting vote, agreed to notify the District that it was in breach of the MOU because we have not be included in a process that has increased, rather than decreased the costs and we will not agree to their . A copy of the letter and an Overview of the new rink project is on our website

Therefore, will return to our regular seasonal schedule, with skating programs continuing through March 2022. After that, we will close for regular annual ice maintenance until resuming Kids On Ice classes, summer camps, and our contract ice schedule this summer.

We invite you to join us for the previously scheduled February 27 get-together at the rink — no longer to mark our final days in our existing facility, but to renew our commitment to the our kids and their families, as we continue to do our part to lift up the community that we have called “home” for over 25 years.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors, Friends of Fort Dupont Ice Arena