

Ottawa East
Community
Association



Old Town Hall

By Email

January 15, 2021

Mayor Jim Watson
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

Dear Mayor Watson:

Poorly Conceived Ward Boundary Change (uOttawa - Lees Campus) Affecting Capital Ward

The Old Ottawa East Community Association respectfully requests that a change made during the course of the Ward Boundary Review be reversed before the by-law is proclaimed January 27, 2021. The change does not meet the City's criteria required for a ward boundary change.

Specifically, on December 9, 2020 City Council approved ward boundary changes that included the transfer of the University of Ottawa's Lees Avenue campus from Capital Ward to Rideau-Vanier.

This transfer was introduced by an unknown party near the end of the lengthy ward boundary consultation process but the Old Ottawa East Community Association and the Old Ottawa East community were not made aware of the change until after FEDCO had blessed it.

Specifically, the "Recommendations Report" for Council recommended:

"Move the Gee-Gees sports field from W6-19 (Capital) to W6-17 (Rideau-Vanier). The reasons given refer to a better boundary (the River rather than Highway 417) and the area's association with sports facilities directly to the north in Rideau-Vanier. In the recommended ward boundary configuration, the Gee-Gees sports field is moved from W6-19 to W6-17. There are no residents in this area." (p23) The report later says: "At Robinson Park and Gee Gees Field, #417 is not a big boundary; use the River instead." (p34)

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The fundamental criterion for making ward boundary changes is to "achieve voter parity." The transfer of the Lees campus will be detrimental to voter parity because Rideau-Vanier is forecast to grow faster than Capital. So why would you transfer an area with considerable development potential (it's part of the Lees transit-oriented development area) to a recipient ward that already is larger than the donor ward and is growing faster than the donor ward?

A second criterion is "respecting natural/physical boundaries." The recommendation's argument "#417 is not a big boundary; use the River instead," is ludicrous: the river doesn't become the new boundary - the LRT line does. In absolutely no way is the LRT line as significant a "physical boundary" as is Highway 417.

The third criterion pertains to "communities of interest" and the recommendation erroneously implies that the primary "community of interest" for the Lees uOttawa campus are users of "sports facilities" that are on both sides of Highway 417. The actual dominant "community of interest" is Capital Ward's Old Ottawa East that has included the Lees campus area for more than a century.

So the poorly-conceived Lees campus ward transfer fails to satisfy the three criteria required for a boundary change. Indeed, the transfer violates what ward boundary changes are supposed to achieve. The request for the transfer was from an unknown party and is strongly opposed by the Old Ottawa East Community Association.

One final point: the "Recommendations Report" spoke of just the "sports field." Councillors were misled by this wording because, as the report's map (attached) shows, the boundary change is for the entire Lees Avenue campus of the University of Ottawa.

We do not want to have to seek correction of this mistaken transfer through an LPAT appeal. Please correct the mistake now. If your officers wish to discuss this issue with the association please have them call OOECA Board member John Dance at 613 236 0650.

Bob Gordon
President
Old Ottawa East Community Association

Cc: S. Menard
M. Fleury
L. Dudas
Beate Bowron

Attachment - Map Showing "New" Boundary



Enlargement of area being transferred: south of 417, west of the Rideau River, east of LRT

