

May 7, 2010

Office of the Mayor  
2nd Floor, City Hall  
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7

**RE: Edmonton Arena Project**

Dear Mayor Mandel and the Members of Edmonton City Council:

Last night (May 6<sup>th</sup>) I attended the Edmonton Arena District's Open House. It's apparent that the Katz Group has done its research. While I understand that this is a starting point and not the finish line, the information that was on display last night leads me to believe this arena project is off to a tremendous start.

I want this arena built and I'm happy to invest taxpayer dollars to make it happen.

Please don't misunderstand: I'm not suggesting we give Mr. Katz a blank cheque. I fully expect that he should be responsible for a portion of this project's price tag. That said, what I saw tonight makes it abundantly clear that the benefactors of this project will not only be the Katz Group and the Edmonton Oilers. Each and every Edmontonian will benefit from a complex of this nature.

"Let those that wish to use this complex pay for it themselves," is not an uncommon refrain amongst opponents of the project. I remind these Edmontonians that I and many others happily pay for a public transit system we do not ride, for schools we do not use, and for pools in which we do not swim. Being in favour of using municipal tax dollars to build a recreation complex does not make us fiscally irresponsible. We simply have a separate set of priorities and firmly believe that after attending to many of the city's needs, it is completely acceptable to address one of our wants.

However, it is debatable as to on which side of the want/need equation that this new arena falls. This simply is not an office where millionaire hockey players are allowed to ply their trade (who, I may add, are themselves taxpayers). This is a venue for musical acts and public speakers. The district will revitalize a downtown neighbourhood that needs a shot in the arm. Edmontonians will use this development to shop, to dine, to work and to live. The district will reduce urban sprawl and allow Edmontonians to park their vehicles and discover a downtown experience akin to what can be found in world class cities like Vancouver, Montreal, New York and others.

This proposed arena is more than an entertainment complex. It's a turning point for our city. It's a bridge that leads us from the Edmonton of the past to the Edmonton of the future. It delineates what we are with what we can become. Even if we are to disregard what the Edmonton Oilers have done for this community and how they've helped shape our opinion of Edmontonians as hard workers and winners, this is hardly the type of project that can offhandedly be dismissed as a selfish indulgence for hockey fans.

Mayor Mandel and the Members of Edmonton City Council, I implore you to recognize this development as an extraordinary opportunity. Please appreciate that an Edmontonian with immense vision and a belief in not only the city but its citizens has stepped forward to help create a better Edmonton for all of us.

I truly believe that the proposed arena project is not a tax grab, a scheme, or a boondoggle. This is Edmonton's chance to partner with Daryl Katz to create something truly spectacular that all Edmontonians can be proud of for decades to come.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Poulsen', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Paul Poulsen  
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