



# Richmond Hill Coyotes Change of Membership Request

Ensuring the Long Term Viability of AAA Hockey in the Richmond Hill Zone

March 3, 2018

# Agenda

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- **Introduction**
- **Societal Pressures in the Zone**
- **Operational Reality**
- **Closing Remarks and Questions**

## Introduction of our Board of Directors

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- **President - Ed Santi (Posthumous)**
  - **Volunteer member of the Richmond Hill Hockey Association from 1984 - 2007, serving in various roles including President, Vice President of Rep Hockey, and team manager for over 10 seasons**
  - **Founding board member of the Richmond Hill Coyotes 2008 - 2018**
  - **Served as organization President until his passing in November 2017**
- Richmond Hill resident 1979 - 2015**

# Introduction of our Board of Directors

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- **Treasurer - John Eliopulos**
  - **Volunteer board member since 2009**
  - **Volunteer coach with the organization 2008-2011**
  - **John's son Ethan Eliopulos (2001) is currently in his midget season and a draft pick of the OHL's Guelph Storm**
  - **Richmond Hill resident from 2002 - Present**

# Introduction of our Board of Directors

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- **Director - Nick Melatti**
  - Volunteer board member since 2009
  - Volunteer trainer with the organization 2009 - Present
  - Nick's two sons played in our organization. Christian (2000) played 8 seasons in the organization and Joseph (2004) is currently in his 6th season with the Coyotes
  - Richmond Hill resident 1990 - present

## Introduction of our Board of Directors

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- **Director - Dean Artenosi**
  - **Volunteer Director of the Richmond Hill Coyotes since 2014**
  - **Founding board member of the Richmond Hill Coyotes and served from 2008 - 2013 and from 2016 to present day**
  - Richmond Hill Resident 1975 - present**

# Introduction of our Board of Directors

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- **Director - Paul Santi**

- **Volunteer member of the Richmond Hill Hockey Association from 2003 - 2008, serving various roles in the organization such as Referee in Chief and AAA Director**
- **Founding board member of the Richmond Hill Coyotes and served from 2008 - 2013 and from 2016 to present day**
- **Founder ETA Minor Midget Showcase Weekend**
- **OMHA Referee 1994-2008**
- **OHA Referee 2001 - 2010**
- **OHL Referee 2005-2010**
- **Richmond Hill Stars AAA coach 2005 - 2009**
- **Richmond Hill Coyotes AAA coach 2009 - 2014**
- **St. Michael's Buzzers Jr A. Assistant coach 2014**
- **Richmond Hill Resident 1980 - 2015**

## Introduction of our Board of Directors

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- **Nobleking Delegate - Sante Paglia**
  - **Volunteer Director of the Richmond Hill Coyotes since 2014**
  - **Volunteer Board member of NKMHA since 2008**
  - **King City Resident 1986 - present**



## Introduction of our Board of Directors

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- **Richmond Hill Delegate - Perry Lansing**
  - **Volunteer director of the Richmond Hill Coyotes since 2018**
  - **Volunteer board member at the RHHA for past season**
  - **Volunteer coach at the A levels with the RHHA**
- **Caledon Delegate - Vacant since inception**

## Purpose and Goals of the Richmond Hill Coyotes

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- **Article 2.1 of the Richmond Hill Coyotes states:**
  - **The purpose and intention of the Association is to organize, develop and promote AAA amateur hockey in the Zone with each Member participating and exercising their right to vote with a view to the best interests of the Association irrespective of the Member's affiliation with and Centre Participant.**

## Purpose and Goals of the Richmond Hill Coyotes

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- **Article 2.3 of the Richmond Hill Coyotes states:**
  - **The Association shall promote, administer and improve organized AAA amateur hockey in the Zone by:**
    - e) Fostering and encouraging the sport of hockey within the territory under its control;**
    - f) Fostering community spirit among its members and all supporters;**
    - g) Having and exercising a general care, supervision and direction over all participating Association activities; and Promoting keen sportsmanship and the development of healthy minds and bodies.**

## Purpose and Goals of the Richmond Hill Coyotes

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- **To maintain long-term viability of Richmond hill hockey**
- **To attract Richmond hill zone kids back into the program**
- **Our board remains steadfast in its approach to ensure the long term viability of AAA hockey in our community zone while continuing to focus on long term player development that will lead our players and coaches to contribute to Hockey Canada's program of excellence.**

## History of the Richmond AAA Zone

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- **Late 80's: Richmond Hill Vaughan Kings (RHVK) were established in the Richmond Hill Zone to participate in the OMHA**
- **Mid 90's: RHVK joined the MHAO causing the creation of Richmond Hill Vaughan Stars to participate in the OMHA**
- **Late 90's:**
  - Vaughan joins the GTHL
  - Richmond Hill Minor Hockey Association assumes control of the Richmond Hill AAA Zone which includes Richmond Hill, Nobleton, King City, and Stouffville

## History of the Richmond AAA Zone

- **2005: Stouffville becomes part of the Markham Waxers AAA zone**
  - OMHA grants the Richmond Hill AAA Zone Caledon to compensate: the addition is resisted by all parties due to logistics
- **2006: OMHA suggests separation of AAA from the Stars brand to increase zone participation**
  - Richmond Hill Zone AAA Association granted operation as South Central Ontario Coyotes
- **2018: in review, the brand change has had marginal impact—at best—on the zone.**
  - Major issues of zone boundary instability and impact of the LOR remain

## Introduction of the LOR

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- **Was put in place by the mediation committee in 1997 “to provide an element of freedom of choice ... and ... for the local association to be accountable and sensitive to the concerns of its constituents in order to deserve their support.”**
- **Original regions:**
  - Lake Ontario Region: Toronto and Mississauga
  - Perimeter: Oakville, Brampton and Chingaucousy, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Markham, Pickering, Ajax
- **The LOR began what the committee referred to as “the first stage of an evolution.”**

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*It is our recommendation that OMHA associations and MTHL clubs throughout the Lake Ontario Region have the freedom to elect to play in, or join, either the MTHL or the OMHA. In that way, should the membership of an association or club feel that it is in its best interests and the interests of its players to play in a different Division (MTHL or OMHA), they would be able to make that choice. The issue should not be which Division (MTHL or OMHA) the association or club plays in or is a member of; the issue should be which Division offers a program which meets the needs and desires of the people whose interests are paramount: the players and their parents.*

**From the OHF Mediation Committee Report and Recommendations**



## **Highlights: Present Day Lake Ontario Region Agreement and Richmond Hill Coyotes**

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- **Under the present guidelines of the LOR agreement, the Richmond Hill Coyotes have control over its players from Novice - Peewee.**
- **For Minor Bantam to Midget the organization has no control over zone player movement**
- **The Eastern AAA Hockey League, in which the Richmond Hill Coyotes participates, has 10 of 13 of its members that have control over player movement from Novice to Minor Midget**

# **SNAPSHOT: 2017 player Composition of the Richmond Hill Coyotes organization and the Richmond Hill Zone**

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**Richmond Hill Coyotes 2016-2017 composition**

**Total Number of players: 137**

**Richmond Hill players: 49**

**Nobleking Players: 13**

**Caledon players 5**

**Total Richmond Hill Zone Players: 67 (49%)**

**Other OMHA Zone Players: 55 (40%)**

**GTHL Imports: 15 (11%)**

**Total Richmond Hill Zone Residents playing in the GTHL 96 (70.07%)**

## Coaching Personnel

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Over the past 10 years, RHC has attracted the following coaches into our program:

- **Chris Depiero: Former GM and Head Coach of Oshawa Generals OHL Hockey Club and Program of Excellence Assistant Coach - Ivan Hlinka Tournament. Current 2004 RHC Head Coach**
- **Russ Herrington: Currently the Head Coach of the York University Men's Program. Former 1997 and 1999 RHC Head Coach**
- **Mark Joslin: Currently the GM of Toronto Patriots OJHL and Current 2002 RHC Head Coach**

## Coaching Personnel

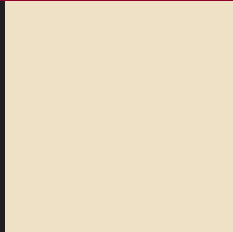
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Over the past 10 years, RHC has attracted the following coaches into our program:

- **Paul Santi: Former Assistant Coach of St. Michael's Buzzers and former RHC Coyotes Associate Coach 1993, 1994, 1998**
- **Mike Gartner: Hockey Hall of Fame inductee and former 1995 RHC Head Coach**
- **James Richmond Current GM and Head Coach of Mississauga Steelheads OHL Hockey Club. Former 2007 RHC Head Coach**
- **Mike Depellegrin and Robert Shilton: both former long-serving RHC head coaches**



# Societal Pressures within the Zone



## Demographics

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- **Caldeon residents do not see the Coyotes AAA as an option**
  - Players from Caledon can select 5 AAA teams ahead of RHC due to distance
  - 2016-17 there were 15 kids playing in the GTHL vs. 5 in Richmond Hill
- **Nobelking has a stronger presence in Richmond Hill**
  - 2016-17 there were 9 kids in the GTHL vs. 13 in Richmond Hill
- **Richmond Hill**
  - 2016-17 there were 54 kids in the GTHL vs. 49 in Richmond Hill

## Demographics

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- **RHC Roster**
  - 2016-17: 15 kids from GTHL, 67 from Richmond Hill zone, 55 from other
- **96 Richmond Hill Zone residents are already playing in the GTHL**
- **In contrast, Eastern AAA League centres outside the LOR like Whitby Clarington, Oshawa, Innisfil (York Simcoe), and Barrie are all experiencing exponential growth, thereby leading to a disruption of the competitive balance in the ETA**
- **Other amateur sports have already implemented freedom of movement models**

## Target Demographic

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- **9 years ago the Richmond Hill Stars and Coyotes had 2,100 players in the organization**
  - Currently the total number of players is 1,418, which is a 32% decline in enrollment
- **Close proximity to Toronto influences both players and parents**
- **Players within Richmond Hill see the GTHL as their top choice**
  - RHC is often 3rd or 4th choice for players within Richmond Hill
- **Rinks during tryouts are stressful: more anxious parents and players look for waivers than actually want to play in Richmond Hill**



# Geographical Pressures

Toronto in 1997  
when LOR came  
into effect.

At the time was only  
Metropolitan Toronto  
with outlying towns  
and regions.



# Greater Toronto Area

Greater Toronto Area is an extensive region

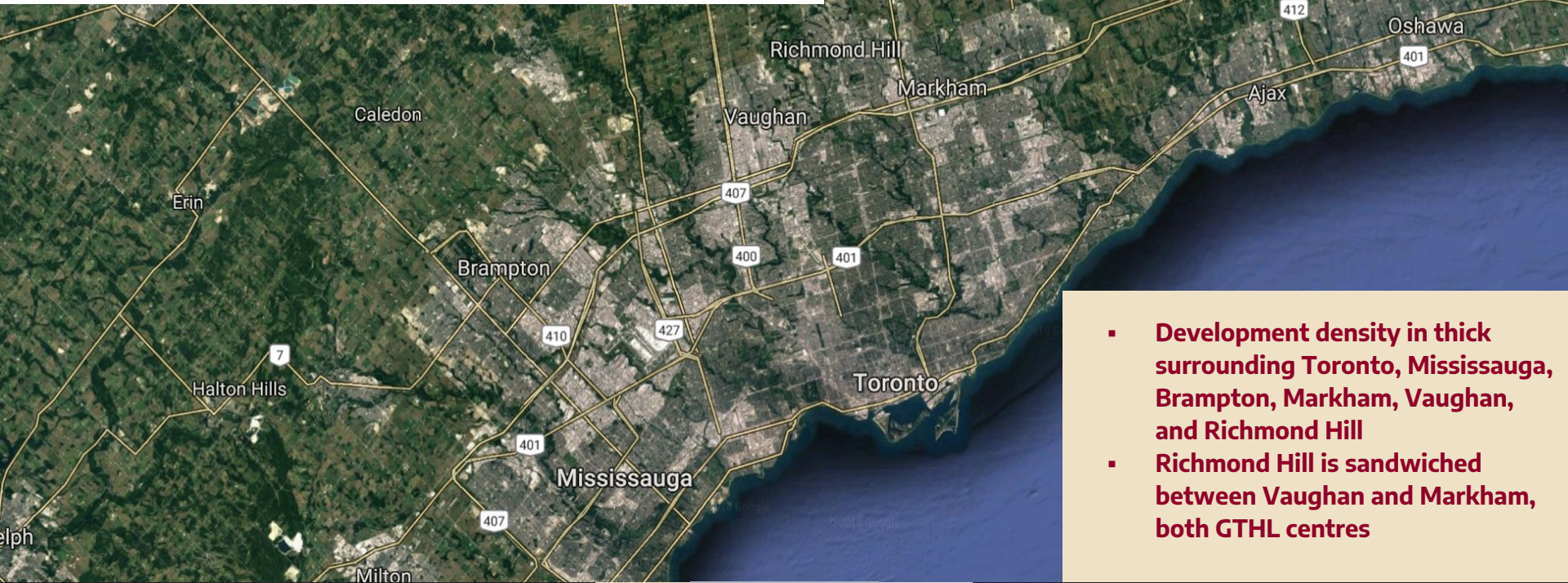
Smaller regions and towns are considered part of Toronto

Residents from central regions see themselves as GTA residents





# Logistical Pressures and Proximity to GTHL Teams



- **Development density in thick surrounding Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, Vaughan, and Richmond Hill**
- **Richmond Hill is sandwiched between Vaughan and Markham, both GTHL centres**

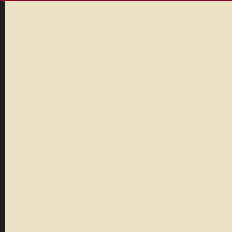
## Real Estate Pressures

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- **The Toronto real estate boom is the driving force behind the drastic change in the Richmond Hill Zone**
- **Mid 90's to early 2000's: Torontonians moved to our zone to escape the city**
- **This began to change in the early 2000's as Toronto saw a boom in real estate value**
- **The real estate prices in the zone prevent new young families from moving to the area**
- **Proximity to the GTHL is a driving force for residents electing to play there**



# Operational Reality



# Deeper Look - 2017 player Composition of the Richmond Hill Coyotes organization and the Richmond Hill Zone

**Richmond Hill Coyotes 2016-2017 composition**

**Total Number of players: 137**

**Richmond Hill players: 49**

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**Caledon players 5**

**Total Richmond Hill Zone Players: 67 (49%)**

**Other OMHA Zone Players: 55 (40%)**

**GTHL Imports: 15 (11%)**

**Total Richmond Hill Zone Residents playing in the GTHL 96 (70.07%)**

- **Minor Atom to Pee wee kids playing in GTHL - 45 kids**
- **Pee wee to Minor Midget - 41 Zone kids in the GTHL with 21 kids in Minor Midget alone**

## The Story Behind the Numbers

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- **Richmond Hill Zone residents are choosing the GTHL over the Coyotes program almost 2:1**
- **Perception of GTHL is that it's the premier league in Ontario for development and exposure**
- **Too much travel in the OMHA: residents are paying a premium in real estate to be close to the city yet are not able to take advantage of proximity**
- **Rinks during tryouts are stressful: more anxious parents and players look for waivers than actually want to play in Richmond Hill**

## **The LOR Rules in Practice**

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- **The existing LOR rules create tremendous stress on zone volunteers and residents**
- **Increased impact on the zone across all organization operations**
  - **Sets a negative tone for the organization**
  - **Marginalizes the brand of the organization**
  - **Difficult to retain players**
- **Movement rules do not encourage playing in Richmond Hill**



## The LOR Rules in Practice

- **Example scenario:**

- 45 Richmond Hill Zone Kids playing in the GTHL**

- **Assume 38 are kids deemed eligible based on ability to play for the coyotes. The remaining 7 are kids that were previously released by our organization**
    - **Tryouts commence day 1**
    - **On tryouts day 4 organization issues 38 registered letters to Richmond Hill Zone residents**
    - **Organization must also release 38 other players from zone**

## The LOR Rules in Practice

- **Example scenario:**

- 45 Richmond Hill Zone Kids playing in the GTHL**

- **Our board of directors and coaches has receive threats and character defamation for enforcing the OHF rules**
    - **Of the 38 registered letters sent to players, approximately 65% will attempt an appeal**
    - **13 players will sign with our organization “feeling forced” to play in the zone**
    - **Our volunteer board is now challenged with the task of investing over 50 hours (2 hours per appeal) to defend the decision and the rules put in place by the OHF**

## The LOR Rules in Practice

- **Example scenario:**

- 45 Richmond Hill Zone Kids playing in the GTHL**

- **Of these 25 hearings, half will skirt the system beforehand. 13 hearings will take place while coaches scramble to find players during summer since 38 players were released**
    - **Of the 13 appeals that reach hearings, precedent says 50% will be successful—for this exercise we will use 80%. Therefore, 10 players will be forced to remain in the zone**

## The LOR Rules in Practice

- **Herein lies the paradox of the LOR:**
  - **On day 4 of tryouts our organization set aside 38 cards for zone controlled players**
  - **On day 4 of tryouts we had to release 38 other players that could have played for the zone**
  - **By mid-summer, our organization nets 13 forced-to-sign players and 10 players who lost appeals, for a total of 23**
  - **Releasing 38 players leaves our organization at a deficit of 15 players by mid-summer.**
  - **The rules in place simply do not work**

## **Current Impact on Individual Teams and the Organization**

- **Approximately half of players are from the Richmond Hill Zone**
- **Coaches are forced to fill teams with players waived from neighbouring closed centres**
- **Players on F1 waivers join the team for 2 years**
  - **Players report to their home centres each minor year**
  - **Many players remain in home centres because their movement is restricted**
  - **Often they do not return after receiving proper development and a chance to play**
- **Three past coaches have left for closed centres due to easier team-building efforts compared with LOR centres**

## Current Impact on Individual Teams and the Organization

- **Present-day composition means no subvented rates**
  - **Requires 50% Richmond Hill residents in the program**
  - **Currently 35% Richmond Hill residents**
  - **Starting next season, the organization will be charged an extra \$60/hr for ice**
    - **A total of approx. \$74,500 incl. tax for the season**

## **Special Members Meeting on February 15, 2018**

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- **Held to discuss change of membership request**
- **Attended by approximately:**
  - **60 RHC members**
  - **4 zone residents playing in GTHL**
  - **6 RHHA members**
- **Majority of attendees from Novice to Minor Peewee**
- **Parents looking for clarity and to understand impact for next season**
- **Overwhelming concern:**
  - **Keep RHC ice time in Richmond Hill for practices and games**
  - **Maintain the existing culture and environment for the program if granted entry to GTHL for 2018-2019 playing season**

## Benefits of RHC Joining the GTHL

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- **Local kids playing locally**
- **Vaughan Kings as precedent**
- **No more waivers**
- **No more extra stress during tryouts**
- **Achieves what people in the zone are already demonstrating**



## Closing thoughts

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- Residents of the zone demonstrate the desire to play in the GTHL
- 96 kids currently playing in the GTHL rather than with Richmond Hill
- We are confident in our ability to attract at least 25% of kids back to Richmond Hill
- Will save the organization \$74,500 and ensure a quality program
- This move is in line with original reason this organization was created: Richmond Hill hockey
- We demonstrate the ability to run an excellent hockey program with the coaches we have been able to attract
- Vaughan is historical precedent: no reason why Richmond Hill AAA hockey cannot witness the same success and be a viable long-term option for its residents
- “It is not what the MTHL or OMHA wants that matters. It is not what the clubs or local associations want that matters. What matters is what the players and parents want, subject to their responsibilities to their fellow players and parents in the balance of the OHF, in accordance with the CHA principles by which we have all agreed to abide.”\*

\* From the OHF Mediation Committee Report and Recommendations

