THE UN-FAB FOUR: HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT?

The Canada Games Park bill, the REJECTED legal opinion, and the explanations taxpayers still deserve from the UN-FAB FOUR as they reject putting Thorold FIRST?

Executive summary and illustrated political satire | Nicholas Bozza

Body word count: approximately 744 | Estimated reading time: approximately 3 minutes for summary body only. Excludes headings, vote table, sign-off, full disclaimers, cartoons, captions and references.

The agreement and Legacy Lease are available. The obligation to explain them should not be sold separately:

Canada Games Park is a real public facility with benefits and substantial financial obligations. My criticism concerns the bargain Thorold accepted and the quality of its continuing oversight. Taxpayers deserve understandable answers about what the City received, what it must keep paying, what control it holds and why a further external legal opinion was rejected. Publishing an agreement is useful; explaining its practical consequences remains a separate responsibility.

The commitment taxpayers inherited

The “Brock deal” involves Brock University, Thorold, St. Catharines and Niagara Region. Brock owns the land. Under the published agreement, Brock, Thorold and St. Catharines share operating costs and deficits in equal thirds. Each partner has one general management-committee vote, with exceptions: Niagara does not vote on rental rates, and some significant decisions require consensus. The operating-cost comparison therefore needs those qualifications. [1]

The initial legacy term is 38 years. The lease distinguishes the tenants’ building interests during the term from what happens when it ends: subject to the lease provisions, the buildings pass to Brock without compensation. There are also lifecycle-funding obligations and confidentiality provisions that recognize statutory information-access processes. These terms require a plain explanation; this summary does not provide a legal opinion or a verified lifetime-cost calculation. [1]

The ribbon-cutting lasted a day. The bills will keep arriving for decades. Thorold’s initial contribution was only part of the commitment; operating costs and future capital expenses also matter.

The record and the rejected legal opinion

December 2019 reporting records a 6–3 partnership decision, supported by Ugulini, Sentance, Dekker, Neale, Kenny and Wilson, with Longo, DeRose and Handley opposed. Operating arrangements were still being developed. May 2021 reporting describes another 6–3 approval amid disagreement over disclosure and procedure. Returning supporters should explain how the resulting arrangement compares with what they expected. [2–3, 14]

Council did request scrutiny. January 2023 reporting describes an order for a detailed staff financial review and a management presentation. In April, O’Hare questioned empty courts and rinks; other councillors raised promotion, use and financial information. It would be inaccurate to say that no review or questioning occurred. These historic reports are not a current occupancy audit. [4–5]

On October 3, 2023, Handley’s motion seeking an external legal opinion about Canada Games Park financials and the consortium agreement was defeated 5–4. One switched vote would have reversed the result. [6]

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Vote: For the external opinion	Vote: Against the external opinion
Anthony Longo	Tim O'Hare NOT in office to vote for the deal
Henry D'Angela	Nella Dekker in office to vote for the deal
Carmen DeRose	Ken Sentance in office to vote for the deal
Jim Handley	Mike De Divitiis NOT in office to vote for the deal
	Mayor Terry Ugulini in office to vote for the deal

O'Hare's stated rationale was that municipal legal advisers had already worked on the agreement and further spending could be unnecessary. The finance director also described restrictions on sharing financial information. Later in October, a municipal solicitor's explanation of the buildings' status during and after the lease was presented. Those facts belong in a fair assessment. The question remains whether the explanations and scrutiny were sufficient. [6–7]

Four matching votes still need four explanations

O'Hare and De Divitiis were not on council for the original approval. They are accountable for their subsequent oversight and their own October 2023 votes. Dekker and Sentance should explain both their earlier support and their later opposition to additional external advice. What did each member read, which advice did each rely on, and what resolved the outstanding questions? [2, 6, 8]

"UN-FAB FOUR" describes my perception of political alignment, not an official caucus or proof of coordination. Matching votes establish agreement on the specified motion; they do not establish a secret pact or reveal private motives. The cartoons illustrate my criticism through invented scenes and dialogue. They supply no additional vote evidence.

Some voters have told me they felt other controversies distracted attention from the Brock deal. I report that as their perception, not as proof that any councillor deliberately created a distraction. The documented votes are set out above; the motives behind them have not been established. Voters must make their own judgment at the ballot box based on the information available. In my view, fuller public explanations would help them make that judgment.

What taxpayers should receive

A useful public explanation would identify total annual City exposure without double counting; separate operating subsidy, purchased time and capital funding; measure resident use; explain governance and rental rights; reconcile forecasts with results; and set out realistic options for improvement. It should also explain the end-of-lease outcome. If further external advice is rejected, councillors should identify the questions already answered and explain how remaining uncertainties will be resolved.

A valuable facility can still deserve more demanding scrutiny. Residents throughout Thorold should expect individual reasons for consequential decisions and follow-through when they ask questions. My criticism concerns the recorded decisions and their explanation; the final electoral judgment belongs to residents.

A majority can close a motion. It cannot close the public's right to ask why.

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Article disclaimer

This report contains political opinion, interpretation, attributed reporting and expressly identified fiction. UN-FAB FOUR and earlier lineup nicknames describe the author's perceived political alignment; they do not identify an official caucus or establish collusion. Shared votes do not prove coordination, and disagreement does not establish incompetence or improper motives. No finding is made that any councillor failed to read an agreement, deliberately manufactured election controversy, misused funds or concealed every document. No complete lifetime-cost calculation, comprehensive vote audit or legal opinion is supplied. Historic figures and questions should not be treated as current audited results. References permit readers to check the stated basis and consider contrary explanations. Documented corrections and responses are welcome. References to an election distraction or protective pact express suspicion or opinion, not a finding of deliberate coordination; an absence of evidence disproving a suspicion does not establish it. The suggested $1-million donation is a hypothetical comparison, not a verified available alternative or a costed substitute for the project. Accounts of private conversations reflect the author's recollection and have not been independently corroborated unless a source is identified.

All cartoon scenes, dialogue, props, receipts, extra volumes, invisible reports, painted curtains, trains and celebrity appearances are invented metaphors. There is no claim of a real emergency, secret arrangement, booking, concert, invitation, celebrity endorsement, parade participation or municipal payment. Artwork is satire, not evidence. "Translation pending" means a plain-language explanation in the joke, not that the published agreement is unavailable in English. "Against transparency" is the author's opinion about a specified vote against further external legal advice, not the wording of the motion. Source notes embedded in older cartoons may be abbreviated; the factual distinctions and corrections in this report govern its accompanying commentary.

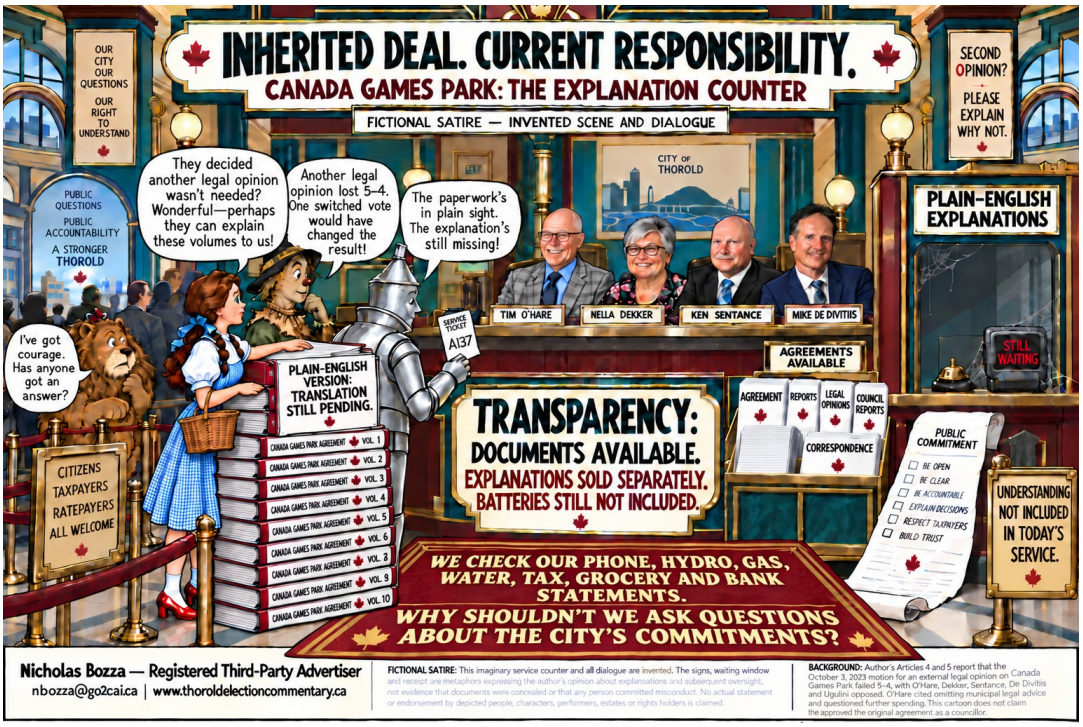
Illustrated gallery

These cartoons turn this report's central questions—cost, scrutiny and accessible explanations—into visual satire. Read them alongside the decisions and sources above: the scenes are invented, and the jokes illustrate my criticism rather than prove it. Both cartoons and their footers are reproduced below.

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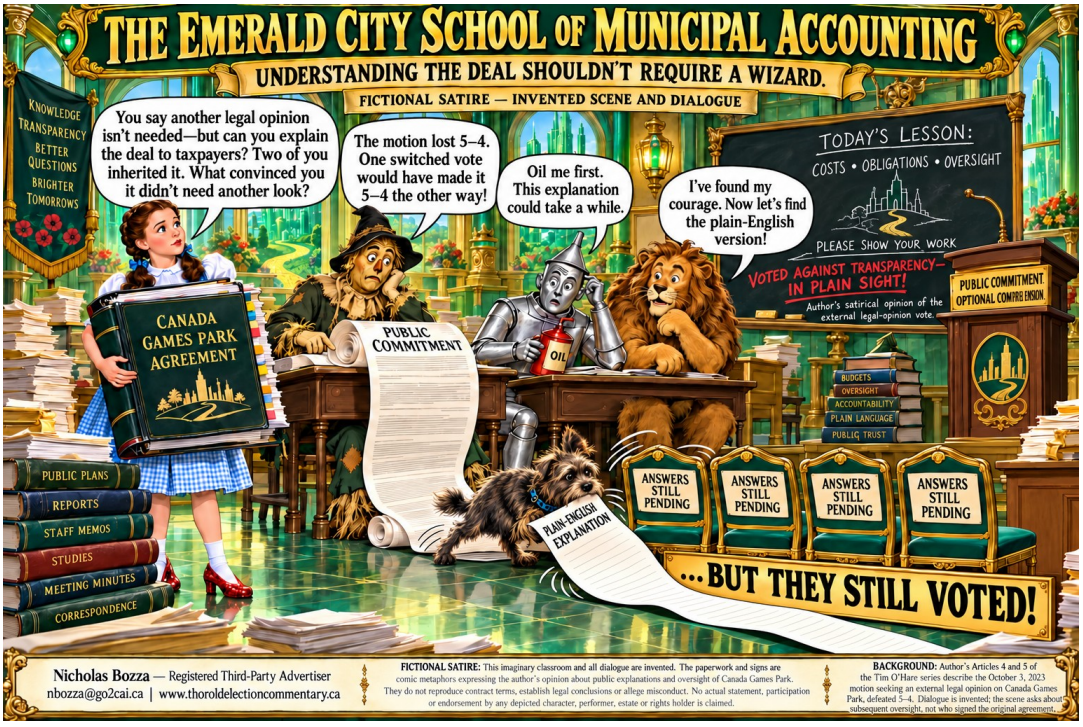
Montage I

Inherited deal and the explanation counter



The latest counter scene includes the agreement volumes, pending plain-English explanation and household-statement rug. Extra volumes and the empty service window are exaggerated props, not a document inventory or proof that nobody can explain the agreement.

The school of municipal accounting



The chairs and chalkboard express the author's view. The historical motion sought an external legal opinion; it did not prohibit all review. Staff review and management questioning occurred. No actual councillor uttered the fictional dialogue.

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Detailed reference sheet

References checked October 18, 2026. The full report's reference list is retained below; some background sources relate to passages not repeated in this summary. News reports are attributed accounts of council proceedings, not substitutes for a complete minutes-and-video audit. The published agreement is the primary contractual text; this article is commentary, not legal advice.

[1] City of Thorold, Canada Games Park Consortium; Consortium and Co-Tenancy Agreement dated May 18, 2021, including attached Legacy Lease.

https://www.thorold.ca/recreation-culture-community/canada-games-park/canada-games-park-consortium/

Primary index and downloadable agreement. Pinpoints: definition of Legacy Period; sections 10.1, 11–13, 17, 23–24; Legacy Lease sections 2.1 and 3.3. Operating thirds, general voting, rental-rate exception, capital provisions, term, confidentiality and statutory-access recognition. Not proof of a particular total lifetime cost. Agreement: https://media-003-ca.cdn.govstack.com/thorold-ca/media/ncdnrnpd/may182021_consortium-and-co-tenancy-agreement-website-version.pdf
Legacy Lease: https://media-003-ca.cdn.govstack.com/thorold-ca/media/afdavsqt/may182021_csg-legacy-lease-execution-version-website-version.pdf

[2] Cathy Pelletier, ThoroldToday, UPDATE 2 Councillors weigh in on Thorold's partnership, December 5, 2019.

https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/update-2-councillors-weigh-in-on-thorolds-partnership-1901797

Reports December 3 partnership debate, conditions, stated benefits and concerns, and named 6–3 vote. Supports Dekker and Sentance's earlier support; does not establish later private motives.

[3] Ludvig Drevfjall, ThoroldToday, Thorold city councillors in heated exchange with mayor as Canada Summer Games agreement passes, May 19, 2021.

https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/thorold-city-councillors-in-heated-exchange-with-mayor-as-canada-summer-games-agreement-passes-3794439

Reports 6–3 approval, Longo/DeRose/Handley opposition, competing claims about disclosure and the mayor's response. Allegations in the debate remain attributed allegations.

[4] Bernard Lansbergen, ThoroldToday, City council orders financial review of Canada Games arena, January 18, 2023.

https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/city-council-orders-financial-review-of-canada-games-arena-6395399

Important contrary evidence: staff financial review was requested; management attendance sought. Historic unused-ice concerns are not a current audit.

[5] Bernard Lansbergen, ThoroldToday, Canada Games Park management grilled by Thorold City Council, April 12, 2023.

https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/canada-games-park-management-grilled-by-thorold-city-council-6842804

Records management presentation and questions, including O'Hare on empty space. Refutes an absolute claim of no scrutiny; does not prove adequacy of all answers.

[6] Bernard Lansbergen, ThoroldToday, City council closes door on Canada Games Park investigation, October 4, 2023.

https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/city-council-closes-door-on-canada-games-park-investigation-7639427

Reports October 3 motion, named 5–4 vote, O'Hare's existing-advice/cost rationale, Dekker's objection to repeated criticism and finance director's disclosure limitations. It is not an October 25 vote and not a vote abolishing all review.

[7] Bernard Lansbergen, ThoroldToday, City Council still debating crappy Canada Games Park deal, October 25, 2023.

https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/city-council-still-debating-crappy-canada-games-park-deal-7734304

Reports October 24 presentation of municipal solicitor's ownership/lease explanation and continuing disagreement. Confirms later legal clarification occurred.

[8] City of Thorold, Election 2022; Bernard Lansbergen, Meet your newly elected councillors, October 24, 2022.

https://www.thorold.ca/council-administration/elections/election-2022/

Official election index plus contemporary reporting: https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/meet-your-newly-elected-councillors-5999876 . O'Hare and De Divitiis first elected; Dekker and Sentance returned. Results do not establish why anyone won or retired.

[9] The Beatles, The Beatles Anthology.

https://www.thebeatles.com/beatles-anthology-0

Official history identifies Ringo replacing Pete Best in August 1962. Used only to correct the lineup metaphor.

[10] Sheila Marikar, ABC News, Paul McCartney Says Yoko Ono Didn't Break Up the Beatles, October 29, 2012.

https://abcnews.com/blogs/entertainment/2012/10/paul-mccartney-says-yoko-ono-didnt-break-up-the-beatles

Reports McCartney's David Frost interview rejecting blame of Ono. Does not establish a single alternative cause of the breakup.

[11] The Beatles official song catalogue; John Lennon official Imagine material.

https://www.thebeatles.com/songs

Title references only: Help!, Taxman, Please Please Me, All Together Now, The Long and Winding Road, We Can Work It Out and Let It Be. Imagine is a Lennon solo work. No lyric reproduction or endorsement.

[12] The Beatles official Abbey Road album page.

https://www.thebeatles.com/abbey-road

Album released September 26, 1969; official page identifies the London crossing photograph. User's supplied cover used as composition reference, not reproduced as a new documentary Thorold photograph.

[13] City of Thorold, Index and Zoning Maps, Schedule A6D (PDF page 14); City zoning index.

https://media-003-ca.cdn.govstack.com/thorold-ca/media/4rim0wjt/zoning-by-law-60-2019-combined-maps.pdf

Schedule A6D labels Abbey Drive, Keefer Road and Decew Road. Current City index: https://www.thorold.ca/building-business-development/planning-and-development/zoning/ . This geographic reference does not verify a real zebra crossing at the imaginary cartoon location.

[14] City report PWCS2019-81, Thorold Community Arenas Strategy Canada Games Park Legacy Project, December 3, 2019.

https://media-003-ca.cdn.govstack.com/thorold-ca/media/vcjn3m5w/pwcs2019-81-thorold-community-arenas-strategy-canada-games-park-legacy-project.pdf

Contemporaneous staff recommendation and supporting rationale, useful context for evaluating the earlier commitment rather than treating every later cost as unexpected.

[15] Seven Natural Wonders, 7 Natural Wonders of the World.

https://sevennaturalwonders.org/7-natural-wonders-of-the-world/

The organization's seven-item list includes Victoria Falls and does not include Niagara Falls. This supports only the list distinction; the Eighth Wonder comparison is the author's joke.