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?

Special report and illustrated political satire | Nicholas Bozza

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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 real benefits and substantial financial obligations. Voters' criticism concerns the deal Thorold accepted and the quality of oversight that followed. Taxpayers deserve straightforward answers: what did taxpayers receive, what must taxpayers keep paying, and why was a further external legal opinion rejected?

This report brings together my earlier commentary, the published agreement, contemporary reporting and our cartoons. The nicknames, theatrical scenes and musical jokes express my opinion. The vote table and references identify the factual foundation. A joke can open the door; the record must carry the argument.

The case in one minute: The case is that a major shared facility deserves understandable, continuing public accountability. Publishing a lengthy agreement is useful. It is not the same as explaining costs, access, financial risks and practical choices. Nor does winning a vote make the questions disappear.

There are important limits. Council did order a staff financial review in January 2023. The agreement can be downloaded. O'Hare questioned facility management in April 2023. The later defeated motion sought an external legal opinion; it was not a vote banning every form of scrutiny. Those distinctions make the criticism more accurate, not less demanding. [1–6]
We check our household statements. We are entitled to ask council to explain the City's commitments, too.

Soon, I will release my endorsements and explain both the choices I support and why I am not endorsing certain others. First, here is the record that informs my judgment.

The long and winding commitment: The UN-FAB FOUR theme song – it's been overplayed:

Calling this the "Brock deal" is shorthand, not a description of a two-party transaction. The consortium involves Brock University, Thorold, St. Catharines and Niagara Region. Brock owns the land. The published agreement allocates operating costs and deficits in equal thirds among Brock, Thorold and St. Catharines without a ceiling for losses say some councilors. Each partner has one general committee vote; Niagara does not vote on rental rates, and some significant decisions require consensus. [1] So Thorold carries one-third of the specified operating-cost and deficit obligations while holding one of four general committee votes. That comparison needs its qualifications: rental-rate voting differs, some decisions require consensus, and leasehold rights exist during the term. The end-of-term outcome still deserves a plain explanation because, subject to the lease provisions, the buildings pass to Brock without compensation when the lease ends. That financial arrangement strikes me as more over the top than my humor.

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The initial legacy term is 38 years. The lease distinguishes buildings during the tenancy from their disposition when the lease ends: subject to its provisions, buildings pass to the landlord without compensation. There are lifecycle-funding obligations and confidentiality provisions, alongside express recognition of statutory information-access processes. These are features requiring explanation, not a fresh legal opinion from me. [1]

Voters' concern is the combination: long exposure, divided control and an end-of-term outcome that residents may not expect. A useful facility can still involve an unattractive allocation of risk. A partnership can still be worth having, but the case must compare its obligations with the benefits and alternatives. The criticism is of the bargain and its explanation; it is not an accusation that Brock did anything unlawful. Many keep asking why enter into such a deal when the alternative was to say here's a million-dollar donation and good luck with it. It would have been much more inexpensive. I know everyone who voted for it says they're proud of it, but isn't like having an illegitimate child out of wedlock. What are you supposed to say?

The ribbon-cutting lasted a day. The bills will keep arriving for decades. Thorold's initial contribution was only part of the commitment; ongoing operating costs and future capital expenses also matter. Taxpayers deserve a clear explanation of the full financial picture—not just the celebration that came with opening the doors.

Promises at the table and questions at the counter

December 2019 reporting records a 6–3 partnership decision, with Ugulini, Sentance, Dekker, Neale, Kenny and Wilson supporting it, and Longo, DeRose and Handley opposing. Operating arrangements were still being developed, if you can believe that. Supporters emphasized facility replacement, partnership advantages and community growth; Sentance welcomed professional representation in negotiations. [2] [14]

That history matters because enthusiasm is not the test. Did the resulting arrangement deliver the value and access councillors expected? My question for returning supporters Nella Dekker and Ken Sentance is simple: show the comparison between the promise and the outcome. Explain the difference. Identify the remedy where the result fell short.

In May 2021, reporting described another 6–3 approval amid objections over disclosure and procedure. The mayor defended the process as transparent; critics disputed public access. The controversy existed before the 2022 election. [3] 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.

A review happened and a further opinion was refused: does anyone see a pattern here?:

The dates should remain separate. January 2023 reporting describes council ordering a detailed staff review of first-year financial expenses and requesting a management presentation. It also records concerns about paying for unused ice time. That is evidence of scrutiny being requested, not an oversight vacuum. [4]

April reporting shows O'Hare asking management about empty courts and rinks. Sentance discussed more daytime pickleball; Dekker asked about promotion; De Divitiis offered a favourable assessment of the operator. These are different contributions, and they should not be flattened into a claim that nobody asked anything. [5]

The next question is whether those exchanges resolved the consequential uncertainties—or merely swept a little sand from home plate between batters for show with a hand broom. Were these questions meaningful enough scrutiny, or, as some suspect, a performance of it? The existence of a question period does not establish the

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adequacy of the answers. A presentation about the facility is not necessarily an explanation of Thorold's leverage, obligations or options.

On October 3, 2023, Handley's motion seeking an external legal opinion about Canada Games Park financials and the consortium agreement lost 5–4. O'Hare, Dekker, Sentance, De Divitiis and Ugulini opposed it; Longo, D'Angela, DeRose and Handley supported it. One switched vote would have reversed that result. [6] There is that pattern again. So it seems.

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

See a pattern? The three members of that majority who had supported the earlier deal—Dekker, Sentance and Ugulini—also opposed this request for an external legal opinion. What did they believe another opinion would fail to clarify? Taxpayers deserve their individual answers.

O'Hare's stated rationale was that municipal legal advisers had already worked on the agreement and additional spending could be unnecessary. That deserves a fair account. The finance director also described limits on releasing financial information. My response is to ask what specific advice settled the outstanding questions, and what alternative route the majority supported. [6]

"We decided another opinion was unnecessary" is a position. Taxpayers can still ask to see the reasoning behind it.

Later that October, reporting described a municipal solicitor's explanation of the buildings' status during and after the lease. That later clarification is another reason not to say that no legal review or explanation ever occurred. It does not, by itself, establish that every broader concern had been answered. [7] Rookies O'Hare and De Divitiis had not been on council for the original approval. Yet they also voted against the external opinion. What had they read, what advice had they received, and what gave them confidence that further advice was unnecessary? The vote does not answer those questions.

Rookies O'Hare and De Divitiis: They both Inherited deals current responsibility: They are accountable for their subsequent oversight and their own October 2023 votes, not for signatures they did not place on the original agreement. [8] "Inherited" describes the timing. It does not replace an explanation.

For the returning councilors, the responsibility has two parts: defend the earlier support and explain the later refusal of additional external advice. The public should not have to choose between a press release from the original launch and a declaration that the subject has become tiresome.

That is the purpose of the fictional explanation counter in Montage I: agreements on the rack, explanations at an empty window. Its sign says, "Explanations sold separately. Batteries still not included." No one actually operates that counter. The joke expresses my dissatisfaction with the explanation available to ordinary residents, not proof that nobody understands the agreement.

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Here is my point about the two rookies: O'Hare and De Divitiis inherited a complicated commitment they had not voted to approve. Before rejecting another external legal opinion, what work did each do to understand the agreement, its financial exposure and Thorold's options? Which legal and accounting advice did they rely on? I am not claiming they could not understand it. Voters are asking them to demonstrate the basis for their confidence—and explain it plainly to the taxpayers paying the bills.

Four matching votes still need four explanations: Is the explanation in the mail? Are they blaming Canada Post as a diversion?

Many use UN-FAB FOUR for the alignment voters perceive among Nella Dekker, Ken Sentance, rookie councillor Tim O'Hare and rookie councillor Mike De Divitiis. "Original" and "new version" distinguish earlier supporters from this grouping. These are political nicknames, not official caucus names or proof of a private agreement. The matching votes deserve individual explanations.

The October vote establishes that these four agreed on that motion; the mayor supplied the fifth opposing vote. He's left out of my articles because he is not up for re-election. It does not prove a protective pact, at the same time, it does not prove there was no pact. The objection concerns public accountability: five votes defeated the motion, but five individual explanations should still be available. A chorus is fine for a concert. For a consequential decision, voters want to hear each councillor's reasoning.

Even when four or five people sing together, they don't all have to sing the same notes. The truth of the music comes through when each voice contributes its own part, in different octaves and harmonies. Yet, to many, even years later, the UN-FAB FOUR still sound off-key, offbeat and off-message-many still say. Why is that? I ask rhetorically of course. But yet, many do still WONDER.

As a side note: Niagara Falls may be a natural wonder, but it isn't on the traditional Seven Natural Wonders of the World list. Perhaps the UN-FAB FOUR's singing could finally put Thorold on the map as the **Eighth Wonder of the World—leaving everyone wondering how four voices can sing together and still miss the tune.** [15]

In my musical parody, the real FAB FOUR band changed personnel while the chorus sounds familiar. But I will not rewrite history to improve a rhyme: Ringo joined the Beatles in August 1962, replacing Pete Best. That is a limited metaphor for a changed lineup, not a comparison of anyone's talent, character or private conduct. [9]

The household bill test

Most households question an unfamiliar charge. That does not mean every charge is wrong. It means payment and checking are compatible. Public spending deserves at least that ordinary habit of attention. If a councillor believes another opinion is poor value, the explanation should connect its likely cost with the questions it would answer and the consequences of leaving them unresolved.

The practical concerns are the quality of reporting, demonstrable local benefit, the cost of underused allocations, future exposure and the City's ability to act. Published operating information should separate committed payments, actual use, deficits, reserves and capital requirements without double counting. A confident answer would reconcile those figures, not merely point to a shelf of PDFs. If we check an unfamiliar charge at home, why should a municipal commitment receive less attention?

The comic rug in Montage I asks why we check phone, hydro, gas, water, tax, grocery and bank statements but should hesitate to question municipal commitments. It is an analogy about scrutiny. The documented October 3,

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2023 defeat did not remove residents' rights to read published documents or seek information. The sharper question is why councillors considered their chosen scrutiny sufficient.

The record includes unused-space and access concerns, but these historic reports are not a current occupancy audit. I am not turning an unanswered 2023 question into a verified 2026 vacancy rate. The remedy is dated, comparable reporting. "All Together Now" should refer to the evidence, not merely the number of hands raised.

What would an adequate answer look like?

I want a public explanation that identifies total annual City exposure without double counting; separates operating subsidy from purchased time and capital funding; measures actual resident use; explains rental rights and governance limits; reconciles forecasts with results; and states the realistic options for improvement. Residents should see the assumptions behind future projections and understand what happens at the end of the lease.

If council rejects another external opinion, it should define the questions already answered, identify the advice it can lawfully disclose or summarize, and explain how remaining questions will be resolved. A later recommendation to commission independent advice should have a clear scope, deliverables and cost ceiling. "Get another lawyer" is not a complete policy either.

The facility can be valuable. The scrutiny can still be inadequate. Both propositions can be true.

The election explanation that no one can prove without full disclosure:

Some people I have spoken with believe political controversy distracted attention from Canada Games Park during the last election. I understand that concern. I do not have evidence establishing that Dekker and Sentance and their so-called version of the UN-FAB FOUR at that time deliberately created chaos to save their seats, or that distraction was the only reason they were re-elected. Nor did anyone make public evidence proving otherwise.

Conversations are not a representative poll, and election results do not reveal individual voters' motives. Without evidence, people have to make their own judgment at the ballot box. That electoral judgment does not establish an unproven allegation as fact.

Nor can anyone claim that all the other participants who retired, did so rather than face scrutiny. The 2022 results show returning incumbents as well as an incumbent who lost. Dekker, Sentance and Ugulini remained on council after supporting the earlier deal, while Councillor Victoria Wilson was not re-elected. [8]

I also will not infer the quality of someone's research from where they grew up or live. Eligibility and residence are separate questions. This report concerns what representatives did with a public responsibility. The same obligation to explain decisions applies to a lifelong resident, a newcomer or a legally qualified non-resident.

A Christmas special that exists only in this article

This FICTIONAL INTERLUDE sets the stage for the cartoon montage in the illustrated appendix. As some background, imagine that I ask Yoko Ono to visit Thorold, inspect the UN-FAB FOUR and save Christmas from another unreconciled spreadsheet. My imaginary booking agent offers a float, a magnifying glass and a set list entitled "Help!" Yoko asks whether the job is music or municipal accounting. I answer: apparently both require someone to read the notes.

Then she stops the rehearsal. In this invented exchange, Yoko reminds me that she did not break up the Beatles. The historical correction is real: McCartney told David Frost that the band was already breaking up and rejected

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blaming her. My imaginary Yoko says the UN-FAB FOUR will have to supply their own independent judgment. [10] That is when the rescue plan loses its headliner.

No visit is booked. No invitation has been sent. No City payment is proposed or reported. The Moose and Goose and Beaverdams Park are merely imaginary venue suggestions, not hosts or sponsors. Any suggestion that the City is paying is part of this expressly fictional skit.

“Taxman” is an apt title reference. “The Long and Winding Road” suits the search for explanations. “We Can Work It Out” would be a welcome governing attitude. “Let It Be” is not my preferred answer to a public-spending question. No song lyrics are reproduced here. [11]

Abbey Drive and the way back to accountability:

FICTIONAL PARODY PETITION: Rename Thorold’s Abbey Drive as Abbey Road, with Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr doing the honours! No actual petition, renaming process, invitation or celebrity participation is reported.

The supplied Abbey Road cover suggests an obvious visual parody: four politicians carrying agreement binders across an imaginary Thorold crossing. The Beatles’ cover was photographed in London; Thorold mapping identifies Abbey Drive near Keefer and Decew. The cartoon is not a survey of a real crossing or a claim that a parade or concert is planned. [12–13]

In the imagined caption, Yoko holds a magnifying glass. The councillors have the binders. The taxpayer has the bill. The missing prop is a useful explanation. If voters change this political lineup, the credit or blame belongs to their ballots—not an imaginary celebrity booking.

This standard belongs to every neighborhood:

Residents in North and South Confederation, downtown, Old Thorold, Thorold South, Port Robinson and Allanburg should expect accessible reasons for consequential decisions. Canada Games Park cannot establish how every councillor handles every neighbourhood. It does give voters a concrete test of trust: do representatives explain their decisions and follow through when residents ask difficult questions?

Calling representatives stupid is less useful than identifying a decision and asking them to defend it. But if we call them stupid and continue accepting the same results, what does that say about the standard we, as voters, are willing to accept? Let’s make that our homework. Frustration should lead to demands for evidence, better policy and an informed vote.

Voters judgment is that the record described here warrants a more demanding approach to oversight. Past supporters should explain the bargain they backed. Newer councillors should explain the scrutiny they considered sufficient. Everyone should distinguish the attraction of the facility from the terms of the commitment. No one gets an exemption because the same colleagues voted with them.

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

The last word belongs to residents making their own assessment of the record. On Monday, October 19, I will release my council endorsements and explain why I support those choices and why I am not endorsing others. Stay tuned.

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Nicholas Bozza
Registered Third-Party Advertiser — City of Thorold
nbozza@go2cai.ca
www.thoroldelectioncommentary.ca

PS: Tomorrow's article, the satire takes the spotlight: a companion cartoon gallery will revisit the questions raised here through visual humour. Today's report supplies the record; tomorrow's gallery gives the same concerns a different stage. **But I've given you a taste below.**

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.

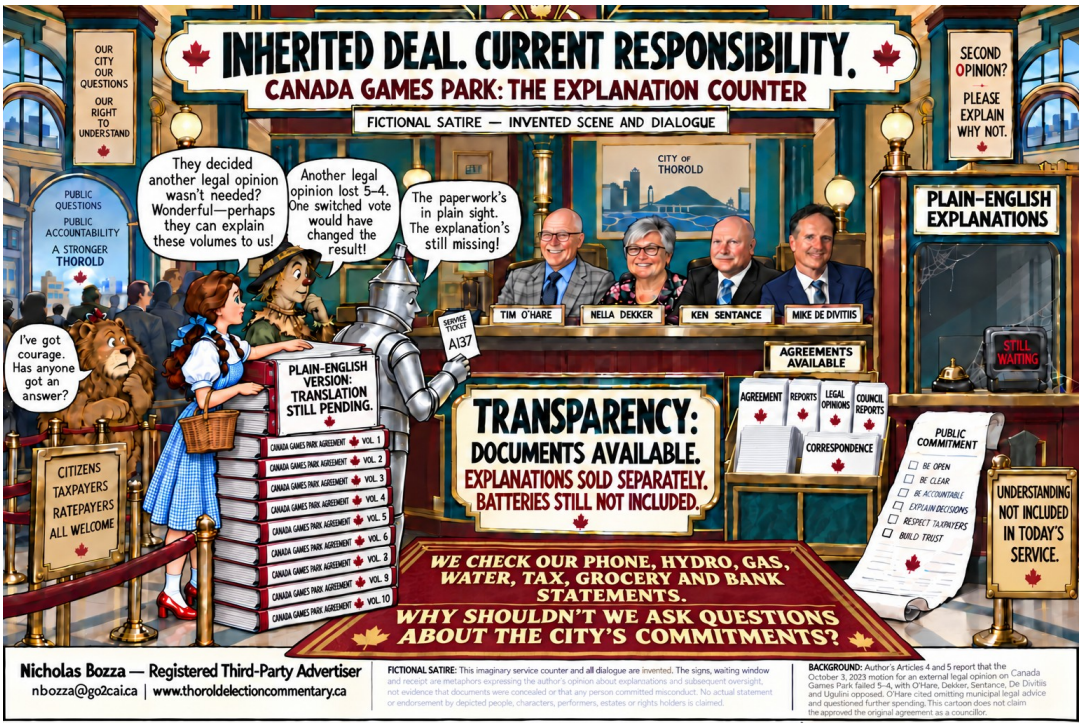
Illustrated gallery

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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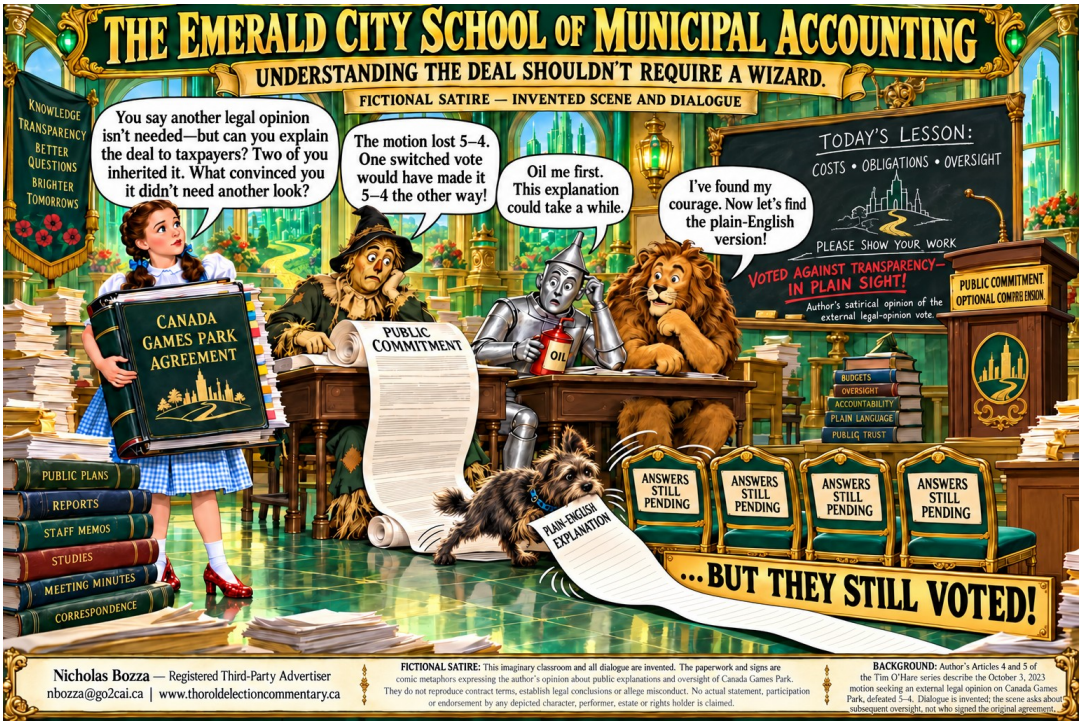
Montage I

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. Numbered notes below correspond to the article. News reports are attributed accounts of council proceedings, not substitutes for a newly authenticated 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.