



**TOWN OF PELHAM**

## **Branscombe Family Rejects Isaac Riehl Skate Park Town to Act Quickly to Choose New Site**

A letter received yesterday by Pelham Town Council through River Realty Development Inc., states that the Branscombe Family rejects the request to build the Isaac Riehl Memorial Skate Park in Fonthill's Harold Black Park.

Isaac's parents, local skate boarders, an Aviva Insurance Broker, and representatives from Pelham's sport clubs, local Service Clubs, and the Niagara Regional Police, used a comprehensive site identification and evaluation process on February 21, 2013 to select Harold Black Park as the best suited location for skate park. Council unanimously endorsed the recommendation on March 18, 2013.

The Branscombe Family, through River Realty, donated the land for Harold Black Park in 1982. The land transfer agreement grants the lands to be used as a "public park" and allows structures like tennis courts, baseball diamonds, soccer and football fields, but prohibits all other structures or buildings – except for a retirement complex and home. These legal provisions became publicly known on May 14, 2013 at a neighbourhood and user skate park design meeting.

"Despite the restrictions, a pavilion and a number of structures have been built at the park since 1982. Within the last five years – as we constructed a new playground, new player benches, new fencing, and a new flagpole – these restrictions never came up," said Mayor Dave Augustyn. "The Branscombe rejection is disappointing because the community wholeheartedly embraces this skate park. It means we will have to act quickly to meet our September goal. We will re-evaluate the other potential sites for a Council recommendation on June 17, and then redesign the skate park for that new site."

Isaac Riehl's parents Ted and Bonita commented, "We are disheartened to hear the Branscombe Family's position given this park was Isaac's favorite. We ask that the Family allow us to build this skate park at Harold Black Park in memory of our son."

This rejection stalls preliminary skate park designs and construction plans. Also in jeopardy is the \$115,000 grant from the Aviva Community Fund and the proposed Canada AM visit to Pelham planned in September.

More than \$143,000 has already been donated and much more pledged toward the community project; this includes the highly publicized Aviva Community Fund Grant and the "Be Riehl, Be You" t-shirt campaign spearheaded by 9-year-old Sam Reynolds. As a way to honour Isaac's memory, the Town also promised to match all contributions.

For more information, please contact:

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