

Please accept this email as my opposition to granting a lease to a Professional Ball Club to use Labatt Park for the 2012 baseball season.

My opposition comes from my position as Commissioner of the Intercounty Baseball League (IBL). I believe the existence of a Frontier League (FL) Team will make it extremely difficult for the London Majors of the IBL to operate. The Majors would have to compete with a professional team playing 48 home dates for the limited advertising dollar in the community and would, it would appear, have no access to outfield fence signage. They would also not have access to the home clubhouse. The team would draw few fans as the perception would be that the product was inferior and the few baseball fans in the community would be saturated with baseball virtually every night.

The Majors under Scott Dart and Roop Chanderdat are a good organization, community focused. They re-invest whatever profits they make from the team back into the team. The team has been in existence since 1925 and the IBL has been in operation since 1919. If the Majors were to cease to operate it would be a severe blow for the IBL as it would be losing one of it's cornerstone franchises.

The FL has been in existence since 1993. It already has 22 former franchises and has a track record of franchise movement throughout it's history. At this time, they need a park for the Oakland Michigan franchise as the local area was not prepared to commit to a \$1 million renovation of the local park. Labatt Park is a great community field, but with the exception of the playing field itself, it is sub standard relative to the other more modern parks used by most of the FL teams. I expect the team will play at Labatt Park until a better facility in the U.S. mid-west, closer to the other teams in the league becomes available. Then they will leave the community as fast as they arrived. It has happened three previous times.

I nominated Labatt Park in Canada's Favourite Ballpark Contest as a community park as that is what it is. If I had known that the city was discussing a professional team tenancy, I would not have nominated the park as it would not have been eligible. The park is used extensively by the community and it's community usage can be increased if this is needed to make the operation of the park more cost effective for the city.

Please do not risk bankrupting a locally owned business in favour of a non local business of which little is known.

Yours Truly,

Joe O'Neill
Commissioner, IBL