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<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON MAY 14, 2012</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>WILLIAM C. COXHEAD DIRECTOR OF PARKS &amp; RECREATION COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Summit Baseball Response to Community Concerns Regarding the Team Name &amp; Logo</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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That, on the recommendation of the Director of Parks & Recreation, with the concurrence of the Executive Director of Community Services this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

<b>PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER</b>
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Community and Neighbourhoods Committee  
 September 27, 2011                      Summit Professional Baseball LLC (Frontier League Professional Baseball) Licence Agreement for Use of Labatt Park

<b>BACKGROUND</b>
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**Summit Baseball Enters into Licence Agreement for Use of Labatt Park**

On October 3, 2011, an license agreement between the City of London and Summit Baseball for the non- exclusive use of Labatt Park to play professional baseball in the Frontier League was approved by Council. At that time, the name and logo of the team had not been determined.

**City Council’s Initial Response to Name of New Team**

On November 15, 2011, at the London Convention Centre, the team’s name and logo were announced. Following discussion by City Council on November 16, 2011, the following media release was issued to Summit Baseball:

*On behalf of London City Council, we want to express serious concerns about the name of London’s newest baseball team.*

*While the team owner’s intention may not have been to draw a connection to Jack the Ripper, we believe this name is unfortunate particularly in light of our focus on ending woman abuse.*

*We will be speaking to the owner today and give him an opportunity to reconsider the name.*

Further, on November 21, 2011, Council resolved that,

*That the following message BE RELAYED today, to the team owner of London’s newest baseball team, and that the owner be given an opportunity to respond to these community concerns:*

*“London City Council wishes to express serious concerns about the name of London’s newest baseball team. While it accepts that the team owner’s intention may not have been to draw a connection to “Jack the Ripper”, it believes the name is not appropriate for our community, particularly in light of our focus on ending woman abuse.”*

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**Summit Baseball Response**

Summit Baseball response dated April 9, 2012, from President David Martin is attached for your information. (Appendix A)

<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>	<b>CONCURRED BY:</b>
<b>WILLIAM C. COXHEAD, DIRECTOR, PARKS &amp; RECREATION DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>	<b>ROSS L. FAIR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>

- c David Martin, Summit Professional Baseball  
Lynn Marshall, City Solicitor

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## APPENDIX A

April 9, 2012

Mr. Bill Coxhead

City of London / Parks & Recreation

London, Ontario

Dear Mr. Coxhead,



In reference to your request to respond to London City Council in regards to the naming of London's new professional baseball team, I respectfully offer our teams response. After further review, our organization has decided to maintain its decision on the branding of London's Professional Baseball Team as the London Rippers. Our team that features Diamond Jack and his loyal dog Fungo as our team mascots, offer a true play on baseball terms. Culminating with the term Rip, a common baseball phrase you would hear at any ballpark throughout the world, we bring you the Rippers.

Our decision is based on numerous factors including popular opinion, fan support and market comparisons. The data we have examined including polls from several news sources including the hometown London Free Press indicated popular opinion not to change our name or logo. We have received positive response from the baseball community in reference to our brand and have support from top youth baseball organizations and respected sports branding experts. The Rippers have drawn international attention to the City of London and have created a fan base for professional baseball that we hope will draw from many surrounding communities. Furthermore, the interest in our team from regions all over the world documented through online inquires and social media has made the London Rippers and the City of London a recognized professional baseball town. It is now time to move past the team name and create a winning environment for baseball in London both on and off the field.

Though we realize that not everyone will be a Rippers fan, we are confident in our naming choice and do not feel that a team name should be a point of local politics, or personnel agendas.

As our organization continues to make a financial investment into London, we are committed to creating jobs, building partnerships, enhance tourism and showcase professional baseball again in the Forest City.

Play Ball,

David H. Martin

President & General Manager

London Rippers Professional Baseball