



# Merger FAQ's



Some questions and answers about the proposed merger



## Q: So why are we doing all this?

**A:** It has long been the case that the existence of two associations has both positive and negative implications for minor hockey participants in Richmond. The boards of directors of RMHA and SMHA are committed to creating a new association to deliver minor hockey in the city that maintains the positive features of the two great programs to the greatest extent possible, and at the same time eliminating the friction and duplicity that comes from running two, competing organizations.

Richmond residents have had a unique situation in the Province in having a choice between two excellent hockey associations - so why change now? Simply put, the hockey landscape has changed and the boards of both SMHA and RMHA know that more significant changes are coming. The advent of "Hockey Academies" in recent years has had a significant impact on Bantam level hockey as players who aspire to play at higher levels have left their minor hockey associations - we expect that this trend will expand to other age groups. The cost of delivering programming is increasing, from the cost of ice time to coaching to skills service providers; so as to meet the needs for increased quality and extent of programming. The administrative costs of running an association are increasing; the demands of members as well as increased overhead imposed by Hockey Canada and other governing bodies have changed the workload experienced by the volunteers and staff of all associations; resulting in more paid administrators and fewer volunteers.

## Some Helpful Dates

### October 1

- Information package distributed to memberships.

### October 25

- 7pm Extraordinary General Meeting at Steveston-London (SLSS). 1<sup>st</sup> opportunity to vote.

### October 25-29

Voting Opportunities:

- Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> – 7pm-9pm (SLSS)
- Oct 26<sup>th</sup> – 7pm-9pm (RIC)
- Oct 28<sup>th</sup> – 10am-2pm (RIC)
- Oct 29<sup>th</sup> – 10am-2pm (RIC)



(continued)

Given the ever-increasing demands on volunteers in administering minor hockey, we expect there to be significant cost increases in the near future to deliver minor hockey at historic levels. Both boards of directors believe that under the umbrella of one association, we will be able to do more than we otherwise could have, with less of an increase in cost. In short, we think that cost increases are inevitable, but by being proactive and forming one association we can reduce the impact of those cost increases on our members over the long term.

## Q: What’s going on?

**A:** In the Fall of 2016 the Presidents of both Richmond Minor Hockey and Seafair Minor Hockey asked their memberships if they would be willing to consider a merger of the two associations. There were emails, public meetings and surveys and in the end both Presidents and respective boards of directors concluded that the memberships appear willing to consider a merger, so a Merge Committee was formed, made up of representatives from each association.



## Q: How will it be done?

**A:** Your board of directors for each association have agreed that the members be asked the following question: "Do you authorize the Board of Directors of [RMHA or SMHA] to wind up the association and to form a new association to continue the operations of RMHA and SMHA under the new association commencing with the 2018/19 Season?"

If this resolution is approved by a majority of the members of both associations, then a new society will be formed with a new board of directors who will be responsible for formulating and running the new, combined hockey program for next season and beyond. The existing RMHA and SMHA boards will continue to operate their associations through the current season, after which they will finalize an orderly "winding up" of the affairs of their associations, as part of which each will contribute their assets to the new association.



## Q: Why are you calling it a "wind up" - I thought we were merging?

**A:** You are right, in all the discussions we have had in the past, we talked about "merging" the two associations. It was not until recently though that we started to think about "how" to merge the two associations and a number of alternatives were considered. One alternative is to have members of both associations vote to merge and continue operations as one society. This would work, but it would have required us to complete substantially all of the work to establish the new society before the vote - in other words before we even knew if our memberships would support the idea. We considered winding up one association and asking everyone to register in the other - "surviving" - association; this alternative would not have required a vote of the surviving association. A third alternative - the one we are pursuing - is to ask our members if they support the idea of forming a new society to take over the work of both original associations, and then to let the directors of the new society spend this season doing the work required for operations to commence in the 2018/19 Season, knowing that the members had given the boards of each of the existing associations and the new association the authority to proceed.

## Q: What will the new association be called?

**A:** For now the legal name will be the "Richmond Seafair Minor Hockey Association". With input from the membership we will seek to brand the association with a new identity.

The new Board and the combined members of the new Association will be charged with coming up with completely new Association name, brand, logo, and colours. There will be a few years of transition as new uniforms are ordered to replace existing ones. The new Association will seek PCAHA permission to use existing RMHA and Seafair uniforms for so long as it



takes to transition to the new uniforms and colours. During this transition time, it is expected that each team will have both RMHA and Seafair jerseys (home or away).

## Q: So whose programming will be used in the new association - RMHAs or SMHAs?

**A:** The new board will be responsible for determining the programming for the 2018/19 season. Neither the SMHA board nor the RMHA board has made it a condition of their support that one type of programming or the other will govern in the new association. The Merge Committee and the Board of Directors of both associations believe that both associations have provided excellent programming to their members and that the new association would be well served with either. But it is the belief of everyone involved that we have a unique opportunity to adopt a "best in class" approach to programming for the new, larger association and the new board will take this opportunity to survey the programming offered in other associations in the province (or beyond) and adapt the best - in terms of quality and cost - to what is possible in Richmond. If the members of both associations approve the formation of a new association, the new board will need to immediately develop this programming and will inform the combined membership as soon as the details are determined.

## Q: So who is on the new board?

**A:** The new board will initially be made up of 10 directors, 5 each from RMHA and SMHA. It is expected that these 10 will serve until the end of the 2018/19 Season, when the first AGM of the new association will be held where all of the combined membership can elect directors for the future. The individuals who have agreed to initially serve as directors are:

Aundrea Feltham	Cody Kusch
Hanif Hamir	Alexander Levin
Carolyn Hart	Tod MacPherson
Shawn Hill	Trevor Northrup
Steve Howitt	Nigel Shackles

## Q: What if the ten-person board can't agree on an issue? Who breaks the tie?

**A:** The duty of the directors of the new association is to serve the new association. It is fully expected that the directors will disagree on matters from time to time - as is the case on every board! But the Merge Committee concluded that the overriding duty to the new association would guide each of the directors to making a compromise that reflected the best interests of the collective members. The Merge Committee deliberately opted to have an even number of directors so that they would be forced to build consensus and not be able to rely on a "casting vote" or other tiebreak mechanism that would allow individuals to engage in partisan behaviour. If the members of the two associations vote to support the formation of the new association, then the board of the new association is committed to creating the best possible minor hockey program in the province, in terms of cost and quality.

## Q: What will be the effect on our funding, especially gaming grants?

**A:** We expect that most of our funders and sponsors will support any initiative that is intended to improve and enhance the hockey experience we have traditionally provided. It will be a significant goal of the new board to reach out to all stakeholders to ensure that they understand the intentions of the new association before next season. If the members vote to support this initiative, we expect that our financial supporters will also be supportive.

As for gaming, we are planning for a reduction in overall contribution in gaming funding as a result of seeking only one grant from the government where previously there were two. We have had preliminary discussions with the relevant government officials, but until we have a clear indication that this is proceeding, we cannot have meaningful discussions to mitigate the risk of reduced gaming funding. We do not know the amount that the funding will be reduced, if at all, but we are hopeful that we can minimize the impact through contingency funds and sponsorship.



## Q: What will the fee structure look like?

**A:** The registration fees for the 2018-19 season will be established by the new Board upon a comprehensive review of the expected budget, and will largely be driven by extent and nature of the Development Program activities included in the base fee and Government grants.

## Q: Will there be more, less or about the same opportunities to play Rep in the new association?

**A:** The number of rep teams is determined by the level of interest and skill level which will vary from year to year.

So the reality is that we don't know what the new Rep program will look like.

But everyone involved is or has been a hockey parent, and we don't imagine that the new association is going to be wildly different than what we are accustomed to. We do believe that where RMHA and SMHA both iced competitive Rep teams in the past, we expect that the new, combined Rep teams will be among the strongest in the province. This will allow us to attract talented coaches and skills providers, spreading the cost and benefit of such excellence across all of our members so that our H1-4 programs and our house programs - the vast majority of our players - will receive foundational training that would not otherwise be possible. We are excited about the possibilities that having a single, strong association will bring, and we believe that it will bring benefits to all members, whether they come to the rink two, three or six times per week.

## Q: How will the philosophy of the association be determined?

**A:** One of the guiding principles adopted by the Merge Committee and supported by the boards of both RMHA and SMHA is that the "old" board should not be dictating what the "new" board must do. The new association must be able to make decisions that are best for the new association. It will have a new budget, it may have different service providers (or a combination of new and old), it may have different programming (or a combination of new and old) and it will be delivering service to a much larger membership than either association previously. While early steps have been taken toward these things, none of the important decisions have been made yet and it would be premature to make these decisions first and then leave the new board to figure out how to fulfill them - before the membership has even voted to support such work.

## Q: What opportunities will a single association present for a 'C' Player?

**A:** More choices in ice times, greater opportunity to play with friends, improved sense of community, greater opportunities for in-house programming, less travel, more stability.