

Residents want stadium



There are objections to the proposal to demolish the stadium and replace it with a multipurpose sports complex.

PETALING JAYA: A proposal to demolish the hockey stadium in Jalan Selangor here was the hot topic at yesterday's Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) full-board meeting.

Bukit Gasing assemblyman Edward Lee objected to the proposal to demolish the stadium and replace it with a multipurpose sports complex.

He came prepared with over 60 signatures from residents living in areas such as Section 3 and Gasing Indah opposing the idea.

Lee said instead of being torn down, it should be upgraded and the field be re-turfed. He said a new sports complex should be built in another area.

"Let's distribute and build sports amenities in other areas instead of having them all at the same spot. Money is wasted by first demolishing the hockey stadium and then rebuilding a new stadium. Instead, let's just re-turf the field and upgrade it to international standards. We can host national and international hockey games there," he said.

Lee urged the council to make sound decisions. He said ideas might look appealing initially but they should be weighed carefully before decisions were made.

Lee also wanted the council to understand the needs of the public first before carrying out the project.

"If the public requests for an amenity, we can always provide it. But don't build first and then expect everyone to go there," he said.

Lee said Section 1 residents had requested for a basketball court and based on the need for and availability of space, the request was granted. He said the same should be done for the hockey stadium.

He pointed out that there were many schools near the hockey stadium and the stadium should be upgraded so that it would be more appealing to the students and PJ residents.

He said building a multipurpose sports complex would cause the area to become congested.

"Imagine the number of cars that will be coming into Jalan Selangor. Why don't we spread out the building of amenities around Petaling Jaya?" he added.

There was also an argument between Lee and councillor Latheefa Beebi Koya, who oversees the hockey stadium.

Latheefa had asked why Lee had not raised the matter in previous council meetings, to which Lee replied that he had brought up the issue at two meetings but Latheefa was not present.

"I attended two meetings where you (Latheefa) were not present. In fact, at one of the meetings, I brought the secretary of the Hockey Association of Selangor to give his views but you were not there," Lee said.

He also disagreed that because hockey was a national sport, the federal government should be in charge of building and funding hockey stadiums.

"Swimming is a national sport but that doesn't mean we should wait for the Federal Government to provide such amenities," said Lee.

Latheefa said residents' feedback had been obtained on the issue but she hoped to have another discussion with all councillors.

"We did gather feedback from residents in Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 18. However we will include more feedback before decisions are finalised," said Latheefa.

She added that RM2 million was previously approved by the council for the maintenance of the hockey stadium and not for the proposed plan.

Mayor Datuk Mohamad Roslan Sakiman resolved the argument between the two and advised all councillors to consider the matter and to include residents' views.