

Seymour changes benefit golfers, 2 courses

BY GREG HOPE; DAVID MCNEILLY, NORTH SHORE NEWS FEBRUARY 22, 2013

Dear Editor:

Seymour Golf and Country Club has followed a lengthy, open and transparent review process regarding a proposal to modify public play.

This proposal has been developed over 19 months with input from Northlands, the District of North Vancouver staff and council, Seymour's more than 1,000 members, most of whom live in the district, and the public. We have presented at "in camera" and well-attended public council meetings as well as at a well-advertised public information meeting. We have had dozens of individual meetings with district staff and council as well as members of the public. More than 2,000 emails have gone back and forth on this matter between all parties involved.

The goal of the proposal is to reposition both Seymour and Northlands in order to correct a 10 year decline in public play at both facilities, which mirrors a similar overall decline in the golf industry. The proposal directs more public play to Northlands; makes Seymour more attractive to golfers who want a membership experience; and retains and enhances district resident access to Seymour. The proposal increases the usage, revenue, and long-term success of both of these neighbouring non-profit facilities, correcting the current competitive decline into a complementary win-win future.

District residents will have more prime-time 18-hole reserved tee-times available to them and their guests than they currently use, enjoying a "resident member" golf and clubhouse experience. They'll play alongside Seymour members on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, with a four-hour-15-minute pace of play rather than the typical five-hour or more public experience. Access to the full practice facility including unlimited range balls, as well as the clubhouse are included in the green fee. District "resident members" can book these reserved tee-times for themselves and their guests up to six times per year, without paying any initiation fee or monthly dues. A three-year phased transition to this model is planned to allow Seymour, Northlands and the public time to adjust.

Through the public review process we have received overwhelmingly positive support as well as some helpful suggestions that have been incorporated into the proposal. Existing public golfers at Seymour are excited about the "resident member" experience and the weekend access, as well as the tee-times adjacent to Seymour's existing Sunday juniors and Tuesday women's programs. We have received some isolated negative feedback from a few individuals, including some who do not actively use our golf course, and some of the published feedback is incorrect: 1) Seymour's financial forecasts and historical

public play records have been independently audited and verified by Northlands and district staff, including the finance and lease departments. 2) There is currently no public play on statutory holidays at Seymour. The proposal removes this restriction. 3) The public information meeting was well-advertised multiple times in the local papers, on the district's website, in Seymour's clubhouse, was broadcast on Twitter multiple times from Jan. 12 onward by Northlands Golf Course to their 633 followers, and was deferred at one individual's sole request an additional two months.

Seymour is a proud community citizen whose more than 1,000 members have built and maintained the facility since 1953 at no cost to the district or public. Seymour's annual expenses including rent, taxes, operating budget and capital investment exceeds \$6 million annually and provides more than 100 local jobs. For decades, Seymour's junior, senior, women's, charity and environmental programs have quietly provided a community service that is well recognized as a leader in the golf community. For more complete information on the proposal please visit Seymour and the district's websites, or contact us directly.

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