

# Seymour public days hurt Northlands revenue

BY PHILIP ROGERS, NORTH SHORE NEWS FEBRUARY 20, 2013

Dear Editor:

I am writing to provide another viewpoint on the proposed changes to public play at Seymour. I am a resident of the District of North Vancouver and a member of Seymour Golf and Country Club expressing a personal opinion.

The proposed changes are driven by revenue shortfalls at Northlands and are not intended to deny district residents access to play golf at Seymour.

An Oct. 25, 2012 memo by Gary Nedergard, section manager DNV golf facilities to parks manager Gavin Joyce states: "Competing with Seymour G&CC during this past summer has continued to demonstrate the need to address the issue of public play days. In a declining golf market, rounds booked and played at Northlands on Monday's (sic) and Friday's (sic) are less than when competition is not an issue during the rest of the week. Any changes that may occur will benefit the overall financial performances of Northlands GC."

Only the district can make a statement on Northlands financial health, and they have not provided this comprehensive information. However, the district's financial statements and supporting reports plus financial plan workbooks show:

Northlands opened in 1997, and annual rounds of golf played peaked in 2001 at about 50,500. By 2008, this had decreased to 47,800 and for 2011 the total rounds played were only 41,400. This is a 9,100 decrease in annual rounds from 2001.

The following table provides a comparison of recent budgets and actual results by year. A blank means the information was not readily available. (All amounts: 000s).

With actual revenues being below budget by \$300,000 to \$500,000 each year, one can only conclude Northlands is not performing financially and may be losing money on operations. These figures do not take into consideration the capital expenditures that are required each year to maintain the facilities and equipment nor the repayment to the Heritage Fund of the original construction costs for Northlands.

When the Seymour lease was signed in 1953, public play days were a practical requirement to provide district residents access to a golf course. Sixty years later, that requirement does not have the same importance, as the district has built an excellent public course which is available for residents to play.

A 2005 survey commissioned by Northlands shows only 30 per cent of its golfers are from the district. This relationship holds true for the public play golfers at Seymour. The proposed changes make available more rounds of golf to DNV residents than they currently enjoy.

Council needs to make decisions that are in the best long-term interest of its residents who pay the taxes, not visiting golfers from other communities. If Northlands does not support itself financially, it is the non-golfing residents of the district who will feel the greatest pain when they are required to subsidize and carry Northlands operations.

Philip Rogers, North Vancouver