

Subject: FW: Northlands Golf Course

Date: Sun, 5 Jan 2003 16:02:29 -0800

From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

> The time has come to review the future of the Northlands Golf Course.

>

> "Northlands" was to be a Municipal Public Golf Course. The land for "Northlands" was originally earmarked for a large housing project. The advantages of a Municipal Golf Course were apparent to those familiar with modern planning and development. Unless development serves a larger purpose such as creating the necessary density including local housing needs or justifying the investment of community facilities such as recreation, commercial, cultural and transportation etc., development for the sake of development per se is a notion no longer taken seriously and certainly not profitable. Any notion to the contrary is based on lack of knowledge and is contrary to the concept of a sustainable community.

>

> In addition to the environmental benefits including green space, "Northlands" was planned to give the municipality a permanent income of \$ 1.5 million annually, plus repay the Heritage Fund from which the money was borrowed along with interest. This was in addition to providing setting limits on top fees. The original estimate was for fees not to exceed 32 dollars in 1996 terms. One of the pre conditions was the construction of a driving range and a banquet facility. Financial experts had told us that this would be necessary to meet our twin goals.

>

> However, the District used the Heritage Fund as a slush fund rather than as an investment using only the interest as would be done by people with a responsible business sense. The driving range was sacrificed and so was the banquet facility. Instead of \$ 32 per round we charge \$ 50.00 making Northlands the most expensive Municipal Public Golf Course in the Lower Mainland. We, and certainly (even) I underestimated the capacity of the District to mismanage any and all great ideas and relegate them to the level of gross incompetence.

>

> Any and all remnants of confidence I may have had in our ability to manage Northlands along tested business principles was shattered recently when the embezzlement fiasco came to light. It appears that this has been going on since 1997 without anyone knowing about it including our staff who get paid handsomely to manage the facility. In light of this I have come to the conclusion that "Northlands" should be leased to a private company similar in scope to the Seymour Golf and Country Club.

>

> The advantages are obvious.

>

> Northlands despite its profit aspect will be far more in line with meeting our financial and social objectives. The District will receive per annum far more than the present \$ 500, 000 which in any case has gone into general revenue rather than paying back the Heritage Fund as planned. Because a private entrepreneur will maximize the income potential, he will most definitely build a banquet facility. He will also build a driving range, something the District failed to do. As for meeting the social objectives such as giving District residents a preferred rate including seniors and youth, all this including the top fee structure itself can be arranged as part of an appropriate contract. It will also relieve Council of any nagging suspicion that taxpayers money is "wasted" but wasted not because of paying staff more than might be done by a private entrepreneur but wasted simply because we are incompetent.


>

>

>

>

>

 winmail.dat	Name: winmail.dat Type: application/ms-tnef Encoding: base64
---	---