

**Subject: N.V. Rec. Commission - Healthy Community Concept**

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

I have serious concerns about the direction the NORTH VANCOUVER RECREATION COMMISSION is taking. Of particular concern is the steady erosion of the "Preventive Health Care Facility Use concept" - which is at the core of the "Healthy Community Philosophy".

It has been characterized as Recreation Programs Geared to Achieve Maximum Health for the Maximum Benefit of the Maximum Number of People at Minimum Cost. More and more, however, the NORTH SHORE RECREATION COMMISSION IS DEPARTING FROM THIS CONCEPT. It is pampering more and more to the whims of individuals, special and even private interests at the expense of the public at large while using the occasion to expand its already bloated bureaucracy.

A typical example is public swimming. As few as one or two individuals with a special instructor may occupy one lane each for a total of 4 swimming lanes while regular users cannot swim for lack of space. More and more often facilities are closed to the general public to accommodate private clubs - in some cases two days in a row.

Ordinary users, the taxpayers, who own the facilities, subsidize the Commission through their taxes and pay fees on top of that are treated as second class citizens. Pools are being closed ever more frequently to make room for School Phys Ed programs because the Ministry of Education has cut funding for such programs in the schools.

The District of North Vancouver, along with the City, has recently signed an agreement for the joint use of public facilities. This includes recreation. It was contingent that the School Board will make School facilities available to the general public after hours. But while the REC COMMISSION has done so at the expense of adults, the School District has not adhered to its side of the bargain.

While the Commission is expanding its bureaucracy to accommodate special programs, facilities continue to deteriorate for lack of maintenance. Simple repairs take weeks and endless complaining by the public before something gets done. Lockers without locks have been in that state for years. It shows a degree of disinterest and incompetence that is typical of top heavy bureaucracies.

There seems to be a belief on the part of COMMISSION that since programs catering to special interests are recreation related, It is OK to exclude the general public. This is not the case, however. The Subsidy by District taxpayers alone amounts to close to \$ 6 million annually. That same public does not particularly appreciate being locked out of facilities for the sake of a private club. The public will support the use of facilities for school children but not being excluded altogether.

To accommodate individual instructions and lessons, the COMMISSION has adopted the one or two persons, one lane, one instructor philosophy at the expense of the general public. Swimming is a best exercise and is prescribed by many doctors and physiotherapists as part of rehabilitation, exercise and general fitness for their patients. However, the COMMISSION is relegating such people to only two lanes or is preventing them from swimming altogether.

The REC COMMISSION makes a big deal out of the money it makes from private lessons which, in the scheme of things, is marginal while the it takes the public's \$ 6 million subsidy for granted.


None of this would be possible, of course, if the REC COMMISSION were to be REORGANIZED based on the Parkgate model. This particular model is neighborhood controlled. The Parkgate model is far more responsive to public needs and is truly based on the healthy community concept. It does not pamper to one section of the population at the expense of another. It does not pamper to private interests at the expense of the general public. It

is not only more cost efficient but also more service efficient.

But the NORTH VANCOUVER REC COMMISSION AND ITS POLITICAL ENTOURAGE IS fighting this concept tooth and nail and all my efforts to that effect have been ignored even though it would save the taxpayers millions of dollars. Even run of the mill politicians recognize this but they haven't got the courage to speak up.

All in all the Commission, despite its extensive across the board recreation programs, manifestos and glossy brochures, is clearly not interested in the concept of MAXIMUM BENEFITS FOR THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT MINIMUM COST, but rather in accommodating private and individual interests while steadily adding to its already bloated bureaucracy.

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