

Subject: Rec Fee increases;

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

At a recent Budget Meeting of District Council, the Director of the North Vancouver Recreation Commission announced that there would be no increase in fees for the year 2002.

The previous fee increase had occurred within the span of one year and was 34% across the board except that the increase for seniors had been 54% within the same period. Crist had charged that the 54% increase for seniors was discriminatory. The City of North Vancouver had already agreed and sent out refund cheques to all seniors living in their municipality. The District did not.


At that time Crist made a motion on District Council that the fee increases be rescinded since such a step was counterproductive. Crist pointed out that increases of a such a magnitude were not justified and may act as a deterrent to visit public recreation facilities, especially by seniors. The North Vancouver Recreation Commission receives close to 6 million dollars in subsidies from the District annually.

Crist had also pointed out that, in light of the crisis in our public health care system, preventive health care assumes ever greater importance. He pointed to European examples where public recreation is an integral part of the public health care system. In some countries fees are tax-deductible provided patients have been referred to the facilities by a medical practitioner.

Regular exercising under the supervision of trained experts, as is the case in our own North Shore Recreation facilities, is especially effective in preventing stress related diseases. According to statistics, 40 % of all medical diseases are of that nature and can be prevented or cured through regular exercising. The motion to rescind the increases was defeated by the CCA endorsed District Council. Notwithstanding, some Seniors appeared as a delegation in front of District Council to protest against the increase.

Crist stated that while the CCA endorsed District Council failed to rescind the discriminating fee increases at the time, he believes that the mere fact that some seniors protested was the reason why there will be no fee increase this year.

Ernie Crist

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