

Subject: Your letter Dec. 17 -2001 North Vancouver Rec. Commission.

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From: Ernie Crist <CristE@district.north-van.bc.ca>

To: "'hoeberel@dnv.org'" <hoeberel@dnv.org>

CC: Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@district.north-van.bc.ca>,
"FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>,
Directors Team <managecomm@district.north-van.bc.ca>

Dear Mr. Cale:

Subject your letter of Dec. 17-2001 re Rec. Commission.

I am sorry for the delay in answering your questions. I have served on Council for close to 22 years. For 6 of those 22 years I was Councils rep on the Rec. Commission. I have initiated many improvements and programs including the steam rooms and the hot tubs as part of improving public well being and health. I also initiated the "\$ Dollar Day" enabling any person to use the facilities including swimming for a nominal fee of \$ 1 per person.

I believe that public recreation is the preventive arm of our health care system. For every dollar invested in public recreation, this society saves \$ 7 in health care costs. If I had my way there would be no crisis in health care. 40 % of all Doctor visits are stress related. Many old people visit the Doctor not because they are ill but because they are lonely and alienated from society though they may live among the multitude.

Instead of prescribing medicine, the Doctors should prescribe exercising. Motions and initiatives of mine attempting to address these issues are all a matter of record available through the District Clerk's department. I have not been very successful, however. The "Body Politics" simply does not grasp the significance of this issue even though it is common practice in other countries.

To come to the point.

The Rec Commission by and large is doing good work when it comes to the provision of programs. If anything the Rec. Commission is overextended and should concentrate on programs providing maximum benefits to the maximum number of people at minimum cost.

The Rec Commission has become a huge bureaucracy largely outside the control of both the City and the District.

When it comes to running the Rec. Commission like a business, not to make profit but to provide services in a businesslike fashion the Rec. Commission is inefficient and wasteful.

The Rec Commission by virtue of it's bi-municipal function is a vehicle whereby the District subsidizes the City on a grand scale . The City builds the high-rises and the District is providing the playing fields. For every

playing field the City has the District has 3.5. If, there is a shortage of playing fields in the District than it is because the Rec. Commission does not differentiate between City and District residents.

What is true for playing fields is also true for Rec. facilities. For every facility in the City we have three in the District - yet the City has more than half of the population of the District. The City does not contribute a single penny to the maintenance of any of the District facilities. All this means that the District is subsidizing the City and the Rec. Commissions is the sieve through which this is possible.

To overcome this I have proposed to put all facilities under public control based on the successful Parkgate model. That model is not only able to respond to local needs in the provision of programs but since it is under public control is also better run and fiscally more prudent. What is more, since it operates under the Societies Act it is able to raise funds from the private sector. I proposed that all our facilities be run on the same basis but here again I have failed to convince my colleagues on Council.

I believe that the reason for this must be sought in the realm of politics rather than in the realm of sound business principles. I believe that all subsidies to the Rec. Commission should cease and that in its place the District should provide annual grants to the individual Facilities run by these Societies based on the Parkgate model. The present subsidy to the Rec. Commission by the District is close to \$ 5 million annually.

I have further suggested that the playing field issue should be addressed based on similar principles. The District should allocate playing fields to its own citizens and only if the needs of District residents is filled should they be made available to others and only for an appropriate fee. Those fees should be commensurate with the cost and maintenance of those fields. In other words the District will serve District residents and the City can look after their own or make an agreement with the District based on reality.

I believe that the Rec. Director of Recreation should continue to be responsible for programming but that the handling of all business transactions should be undertaken by the Societies mentioned above. In fact I believe that the Rec. Commission as it is currently constituted should be terminated. This is my position.

Thank you for your input.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist



[Part 1.2](#)

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