

Subject: FW: Notice of Motion - request that Municipal Manager James Ridge conduct an independent investigation of the North Vancouver Recreation Commission.

Date: Thu, 23 Oct 2003 12:00:45 -0700

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

To: "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <cagebc@yahoo.com>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Ernie Crist

> Sent: October 23, 2003 12:00 PM

> To: Nathalie Valdes

> Subject: Notice of Motion - request that Municipal Manager James Ridge conduct an independent investigation of the North Vancouver Recreation Commission.

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> Notice of Motion - Report Councillor Crist;

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> That the CAO, James Ridge, be requested to conduct an independent investigation of the North Vancouver Recreation Commission including its benchmarking methods and cost effectiveness of the services it provides, and further

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> that this investigation include all relevant aspects of Shared Recreation Services with the City of North Vancouver and the alleged subsidy to the City via these shared services, including through the joint field use and also the eviction of a bona fide curling club from public recreation facilities, and further

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> whether the performance of the delivery of public services for District residents may be strengthened, economized and radically improved by dissolving the Commission in its present form and reorganizing it along the existing PARKGATE model or a similar model, as outlined in a recent proposal and motion submitted by Councillor Crist, and further

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> that this include improvements of the delivery to District residents of public recreation and preventive public health care services based on programs geared to supply the MAXIMUM BENEFIT FOR THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DISTRICT RESIDENTS AT MINIMUM COST as opposed to the present trend which is to provide MAXIMUM PROGRAMS FOR THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT MAXIMUM COST AND AT THE EXPENSE AND EXCLUSION OF THE TAXPAYING PUBLIC IN THE DISTRICT and further

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> that the CAO's report include a capital maintenance, capital renewal and capital expansion program to prevent the further physical decline of the facilities and public assets and keep up with rising demands of preventive public health care services in the District.

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> Rationale;

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> TO PREVENT THE FURTHER PHYSICAL DECLINE OF THE DISTRICT OWNED PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES, TO MAXIMIZE THEIR USE AND, IN FACT, INCREASE THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RECREATION AND INCREASE IT'S PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE CAPACITY FOR THE MAXIMUM BENEFIT OF DISTRICT TAXPAYERS IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO DISSOLVE THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION OF THE REC COMMISSION AND REORGANIZE IT ALONG THE LINES OUTLINED IN A REPORT RECENTLY PROVIDED TO COUNCIL "NEW MANDATE FOR THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC RECREATION " COPY ATTACHED"

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> The Rec Commission carries no capital burden, as is the case in other jurisdictions, it pays no taxes, as is the case in private facilities - at the same time, it receives an annual subsidy from District taxpayers of close to \$ 6 million dollars annually AND YET its fee increases are annual and in excess of the cost of living index and not below those in other jurisdictions where expenses are much higher for reasons stated above. Indeed, in one year, it increased fees to seniors by 54% and evicted a bona fide curling club from one of its facilities to make room for a private club and yet the facilities are deteriorating at an accelerating rate while at the same time and on an increasing scale, the Commission closes its facilities to regular users to make room for private clubs.

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> The Rec Commission has built an empire and is expanding its services to a degree which has become expensive and uneconomical and it has done so at the expense of programs geared for the maximum health benefit of the maximum number of people at minimum cost. At the same time the Rec commission, by virtue of being a joint service between the City and the District, is accommodating City needs at no cost to the City. This is done through both lack of capital funding from the City towards the maintenance of District facilities and by accommodating the City on District paid playing fields. The Rec Commission is the sieve through which the District is subsidizing the City. The City is building the high rises and the District is providing the playing fields free of charge.

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> While the Rec Commission is expanding its programs to an ever widening circle to a diminishing number of people it is doing so at the expense of the regular users and the regular taxpayers. At the same time the Commission has down played any and all lessons provided by the Parkgate model which is far more efficient and a far more democratic model.

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> Numerous studies have been conducted and numerous consultants hired to address these issues but most of the reports were ordered by the Commission and were heavily biased in favor of the status quo up to and including not only misleading but also by providing actually false information. In light of this, it behooves the new CAO, who has been given the mandate to address the District's serious financial and other problems, to make a full investigation of this matter and provide a report to Council as soon as possible.


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> In light of the serious issues facing the District, it is no longer possible to carry on with business as usual because it is politically expedient as has been the case up till now and because the District does not wish to upset the sacred cow of recreation. The purpose of this effort is not to do away with public recreation but, in fact, to save it and enhance and expand the services in the most effective way possible and by applying simple and tested business principles.

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> Ernie Crist

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