

Subject: Response to letter from Lynn Valley Little League

Date: Tue, 9 Dec 2003 10:20:53 -0800

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

To: <djmerrick@shaw.ca>, <Lyll@shaw.ca>

CC: "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, "James Ridge" <James_Ridge@dnv.org>, "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>

Dear Ms Merrick:

Thank you for your letter in response to User Fees for community sports. I agree with our comments entirely.

The idea of user fees especially for children is, in principle, contrary to the whole idea and concept of community sport and the benefits derived from providing facilities either free or at only a token fee.

There are two reasons why I take and have taken this position for the last 25 years or more. The value of community benefits can simply not be measured and only those who know of the true cost of increased crime, poor health and a less constructive focus by young and old on health and sports activities can gauge the value of providing such a service free of charge.

What is more, the taxpayers are already paying for these facilities through their taxes and I venture to say most of them do so more than willingly.

It is important however, for this community to also be aware as to what led to this unfortunate situation. It began with the totally irresponsible policy of using the District Heritage Fund to cover operating expenses. Less knowledgeable and less honest politicians will tell you that this was necessary to keep taxes down, but this is not the case. Taxes in the District have increased by an annual rate far above average in the Region and this is on top of siphoning off millions of dollars annually from the Heritage Fund but not to build facilities as was planned but to subsidize mismanagement and incompetence. Even this year the District is selling (Heritage) land to subsidize operating expenses while making children and their parents pay to play soccer.


The accumulated value of this Heritage Fund would be in the neighborhood of \$ 500 million dollars. I leave it up to you to determine what the annual interest generated by this amount could do for this community in terms of providing facilities and other benefits. As it is, the Heritage fund and a large portion of the land owned by the District is virtually gone with little or nothing to show for it. Even the Parkgate Community Center, the Lynn Valley Library and the William Griffin all weather field had or will have to be paid for more or less by the taxpayers over and above the money the District received from its Heritage Fund, its Reserve Funds and its land assets.

This is the legacy of irresponsible management and leadership we now have to deal with. Although this may be of little help to you at the moment I mention this since it is important for this community to understand what the reasons are which led to the present policy of making children and their parents pay for something that should be free.

Notwithstanding the above I sincerely hope that this Council will listen to your concerns and NOT increase the user fees since such a policy is completely counterproductive and unjustified.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist

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