

DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Minutes of the Council Workshop for the District of North Vancouver held at 7:01 p.m. on Tuesday, February 22, 2022 in the Council Chamber of the District Hall, 355 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, British Columbia.

Present: Mayor M. Little
Councillor J. Back (via Zoom)
Councillor M. Curren (via Zoom)
Councillor B. Forbes (via Zoom)
Councillor J. Hanson (via Zoom)

Absent: Councillor L. Muri
Councillor M. Bond

Staff: Mr. D. Stuart, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. G. Joyce, General Manager – Engineering, Parks and Facilities
Ms. S. Walker, General Manager – Corporate Services
Mr. J. Gordon, Manager – Administrative Services
Ms. S. Warriner, Manager – Parks
Ms. M. Martin, Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre Supervisor
Ms. S. Merrick, Maplewood Farm Supervisor
Mr. G. Nedergard, Section Manager – Golf Services
Ms. C. Archer, Confidential Council Clerk
Ms. E. Allen, Committee Clerk
Ms. K. Hebron, Committee Clerk

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1.1. February 22, 2022 Council Workshop Agenda

MOVED by Councillor BACK

SECONDED by Councillor HANSON

THAT the agenda for the February 22, 2022 Council Workshop is adopted as circulated, including the addition of any items listed in the agenda addendum.

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Nil

3. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL OR STAFF

3.1. Northlands Golf Course

File No. 12.6140.20

Mr. Gavin Joyce, General Manager – Engineering, Parks and Facilities, provided an introduction to the Council Workshop, noting that 2022 marks the 25th anniversary of public golf facilities in the District and offered his congratulations to Mr. Gary Nedergard, Section Manager – Golf Services for his 25 years of service.

Mr. Nedergard advised that the presentation will cover the two years since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and how the pandemic has impacted golf services.

Mr. Nedergard advised that golf courses were shut down by a Public Health Order early in the pandemic and then determined to be a safe outdoor activity allowing Northlands to reopen on May 4, 2020. Before the pandemic, Northlands had averaged forty-six thousand rounds of golf per year over the previous ten years, with weather the most significant factor in daily use. Golf had been on the decline since 2001 due to various factors, with peak use in 2001 at fifty-one thousand five hundred rounds. Despite the COVID-19 protocols requiring reduced numbers of golfers on the course and weather events including a small tornado, extreme heat, extreme cold and flooding, there were more than fifty-eight thousand six hundred rounds of golf played in 2021. Had the weather events not occurred, staff estimate that more than sixty thousand rounds would have been played.

Mr. Nedergard advised that Northlands Golf Course set a revenue record in 2021 with every available tee time booked, despite low tourism rates. He noted that only thirty percent of tee times are available to book more than five days in advance at Northlands Golf Course.

Mr. Nedergard reviewed carbon reduction and climate action measures undertaken by District golf facilities:

- Heat pumps and high-efficiency furnaces have been installed to replace original units as they reach end of life;
- Gas water heating has been replaced with electric;
- Outdoor lighting has been converted to LED;
- Two hybrid fairway mower units were acquired in 2021;
- One of the greens mowers has been replaced with an electric unit and a second unit has been ordered;
- Many of the smaller blower units have been replaced with electric units, although some gas-powered units are in use as the electric units are not able to function well in more severe wind events;
- Areas of the course not currently in use are left to revert to a natural state, reducing the need to maintain and water these areas; and,
- Sprinklers have been replaced with higher efficiency systems to reduce water consumption.

Mr. Nedergard advised that food services at Northlands Golf Course have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic including changing restrictions, rising food prices and supply chain impacts on food availability. It is hoped that the increased popularity of the sport will help the Food and Beverage section recover.

Mr. Nedergard advised that Murdo Frazer Pitch and Putt Golf Course has seen similar increases in usage, with a fifty percent increase from 2019 to 2021. There will continue to be access and parking impacts from the BC Hydro substation project for another year.

Mr. Nedergard provided an update on projections by Golf Canada and the National Golf Course Owners Association, noting these organizations expect golf participation to remain steady through to the end of 2023 with participating dropping off in 2024 through 2030, though remaining higher overall than pre-pandemic levels.

Council discussion ensued and the following comments and concerns were noted:

- Remarked on the volume of public requests to keep golf facilities open early in the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Commended staff at both Northlands and Murdo Frazer for their work during a difficult period;
- Commented on the course difficulty rating of Northlands Golf Course;
- Recommended maintaining simple public golf services to help keep fees lower and leave extras to private golf courses;
- Expressed concern regarding rising golf fees and reminded staff that public golf courses should have relatively low fees; and,
- Commented on carbon reduction measures undertaken at District golf sites.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that North Shore residents comprise fifty-five percent of Northlands golfers.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that green fees increased by two dollars in 2021 and a further two dollar increase is contemplated for 2022. Staff further advised that current regular green fees are twelve dollars at Murdo Frazer and fifty-five to sixty dollars at Northlands Golf Course.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that a number of measures have been undertaken to support youth golf:

- A Juniors Program is offered at Murdo Frazer to teach golf basics as Northlands does not have a driving range or teaching facilities;
- North Shore high school golf teams make use of Northlands Golf Course;
- The facility is made available to Juniors competitions;
- Juniors play free with an adult; and,
- Promoting golf to families.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that the restaurant does not draw customers on its own due to its location and mainly serves golfers and the immediate neighbourhood. Staff further advised that they also market the restaurant to those travelling to and from Mt. Seymour.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that the restaurant has always had a limited capacity to hold private special events due to its design, lack of private space, and the popularity of scheduling events such as weddings on weekends when the course, parking lot and restaurant are already very busy.

Mayor LITTLE left the meeting at 8:03 p.m. and Councillor FORBES assumed the Chair.

Mayor LITTLE returned to the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

With the consent of Council, Mayor Little varied the agenda as follows:

3.3 Maplewood Farm

File No. 12.6142.01

Ms. Selina Merrick, Maplewood Farm Supervisor, provided an overview of the history of Maplewood Farm, noting it was originally a dairy farm in the 1920's and was purchased by the District in 1970. Maplewood Farm was opened to the public in 1975 in order to give children and families the opportunity to learn food and farm practices and interact with farm animals. Ms. Merrick advised that the facility is staffed by ten people, including administrative staff and the farmers, who handle a wide range of animal welfare responsibilities to ensure the animals are happy, healthy and stimulated. Ms. Merrick noted that most of this work is conducted in view of the public.

Ms. Merrick reviewed safe, outdoor events held at Maplewood Farm during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the pumpkin patch at Halloween and a Christmas concert.

Ms. Merrick advised that Maplewood Farm offers a student work experience program and that the volunteer program has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that high school students, pre-veterinary school students and volunteers assisted by the Developmental Disabilities Association have participated in opportunities at Maplewood Farm.

Ms. Merrick reviewed attendance numbers from 2019 to 2021, noting the following:

- Attendance is highest from May to October every year;
- The facility was closed due to the pandemic from June to October 2020;
- As of the October 2020 reopening, the capacity limit was seventy-five people per hour;
- The current capacity limit is one hundred fifty people per hour;
- A recent weekend saw six hundred seventy-six visitors; and,
- Maplewood Farm offers safe and engaging experiences for families.

Ms. Merrick provided information on animal care, noting that Maplewood Farm provides education for private animal owners as well as the public including socialization and disease prevention. Ms. Merrick advised that the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has conducted an inspection of Maplewood Farm and staff would like to have the farm inspected annually.

Ms. Merrick noted the following enhancements to Maplewood Farm to improve safety, security and animal well-being:

- Installed security cameras in high-traffic areas;
- Upgraded the program room where public events and birthday parties are held;
- Enhanced animal rest areas, where animals are able to leave public view; and,
- Installed a fire suppression system in the livestock barn.

Ms. Merrick provided an overview of community outreach and partnerships, including efforts to reduce food waste at Save On Foods and the Salvation Army's Food Services by using leftover produce that would otherwise be wasted to feed farm animals, as well as a special pass program for the local elementary school and family centre. Ms. Merrick advised that future plans include expanding the existing

relationship with the Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre to bridge education opportunities through both facilities.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that natural predators are used to control rodents at the farm.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that admission rates are nine dollars for adults, five dollars and thirty-one cents for seniors and children age eighteen months and up, and free for children under eighteen months of age.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that many visitors at Maplewood are young families and that visitors come from across and outside the North Shore and that the farm is featured on many “Things to Do in Vancouver” lists and websites.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that reservations can be made by phone or online and that approximately sixty percent of visitors reserve online.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that the current animal population at Maplewood Farm is fifty-three, not including wild ducks and other wild birds.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that goat yoga could be offered again in the future.

3.2. Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre

File No. 12.6144.30

Ms. Michalle Martin, Ecology Centre Supervisor, provided an overview of Lynn Valley Ecology Centre operations, noting that many do not understand what the term ecology means and that the literal translation from Greek is “home.” Ms. Martin advised that the facility has three full-time staff and additional part-time staff totalling four and a half staff members. She further advised that the Ecology Centre celebrated its 50th year of operation in 2021 and has been the recipient of a number of local awards.

Ms. Martin advised that the Ecology Centre Gift Shop has an education component, teaching about the life cycle of products to raise awareness and encouraging the public to ask where products come from, whether they are really needed and how they will be recycled or disposed of.

Ms. Martin reviewed the history of and programs at the Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre, noting that the world’s population has nearly doubled since the Centre opened in 1971 and that biodiversity has been significantly reduced over the same period. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Ecology Centre, a highly detailed diorama of the Lynn Canyon Park, featuring a real suspension bridge in miniature. Included in the approximately four hundred programs offered per year are school and summer camps, expert speakers, parent and toddler programs and many outdoor programs. Holding programs outside meant that many were able to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic, while others pivoted to a virtual format in May 2020. The Ecology Centre’s rapid shift to virtual programs gained attention from other organizations and they were contacted by both recreation facilities and libraries to assist their shifts to

online programs. Ms. Martin advised that all graphic work is done in-house, including a full redesign and additional content on the website to make the site more engaging.

Ms. Martin provided an overview of the partners and volunteerism at the Ecology Centre, noting that they have practicum students from the University of British Columbia (UBC) working in the park every year and that UBC offers a fourth year course in restoration.

Ms. Martin advised that program participation was approximately eighty-six thousand in 2019 and eighteen thousand in 2021 with approximately five thousand three hundred participants online and twelve thousand seven hundred participants in person. Although program enrollment remains below pre-pandemic levels, participation levels are good. Ms. Martin noted that the upper classroom is currently in use and that park visitors are able to learn in the park with self-guided programs.

Ms. Martin reviewed future plans for the Ecology Centre, including new learning areas in front of the museum to improve the visibility of the building and draw more visitors from the park. Some displays will be upgraded and more technology will be incorporated to increase engagement, and interpretive signage throughout the park is planned to be increased and updated.

Ms. Martin reviewed some of the technology in use at the Ecology Centre, including a bat sonar monitoring device that can be attached to visitors' personal mobile phones to show bat activity in the park as well as a stemoscope allowing users to listen to trees drawing liquid and nutrients from the ground and releasing oxygen. A remote underwater vehicle and macroscopic cameras are also in use, giving visitors a unique view of life in the park.

Council discussion ensued and the following comments and concerns were noted:

- Commented on their attendance at the 50th anniversary celebration;
- Commented on connecting with the local indigenous community;
- Commended staff on communicating the connection between people and the land; and,
- Commented on the technology in use at the Ecology Centre.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that Squamish Nation elders have partnered with the Ecology Centre and that staff programs using First Nations knowledge are always undertaken with First Nations involvement. Examples of possible partnerships include place-marking interpretive signage and walks with First Nations elders.

In response to a question from Council, staff advised that the volunteers assist with, but do not run, Ecology Centre programs and that there have been fewer volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. PUBLIC INPUT

4.1 Mr. Peter Teevan:

- Commended the District on the three public programs presented at the Council Workshop;
- Commented on Northlands Golf Course's mandate to provide public golf services and recommended basing course fees for North Shore residents on cost recovery and the market for non-residents;
- Suggested making opportunities for First Nations chefs when considering a new operator for the restaurant at Northlands Golf Course;
- Recommended contacting Capilano University's Film Program as a prospective partner to produce promotional documentary materials for the Ecology Centre and to pursue grant opportunities; and,
- Complimented Ecology Centre staff for their presentation and audio-visual materials.

5. ADJOURNMENT

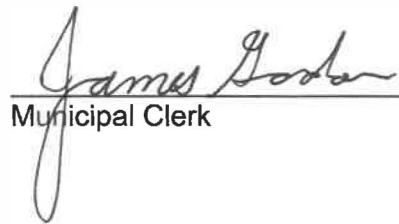
MOVED by Councillor BACK

SECONDED by Mayor LITTLE

THAT the February 22, 2022 Council Workshop is adjourned.

CARRIED
(8:42 p.m.)

Mayor



Municipal Clerk