

1028 Colville Rd
Victoria BC V9A 4P7

May 16, 2017

Mayor and Council
Township of Esquimalt
Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, BC V9A 3P1

H/C 1028-4-17

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT	
For Information:	
<input type="checkbox"/> CAO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor/Council
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill	
RECEIVED: MAY 19 2017	
Referred: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> For Action	<input type="checkbox"/> For Response
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Council Agenda
	<input type="checkbox"/> COTW
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Dear Mesdames and Sir,

You will soon be considering an application to the provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) by the Gorge Vale Golf Club. It requests permission to remove some golf course land from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). In its application to the ALC, the Golf Club states that it wishes to remove the land "for development".

Club President Sandy Fraser addressed the development plans in the Golf Club's three most recent monthly newsletters.

"... some members have noticed and raised questions regarding ... our application to withdraw some of our golf course land from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). This is the next step evolving from the work of the Club's Land Use Committee ... tasked with reviewing our entire property and identifying potential lands that could be considered by us for sale and development This parcel is, in the committee's view, the most desirable and valuable land that could be made available by the Club The Committee ... recommended removing this land from the ALR to improve its attractiveness to developers and enhance its market value.

We believe that there will be substantial interest in the land given its convenient location with respect to the city centre

Your Board ... will be seeking development proposals over the next several months. The potential revenue from the development of even a small proportion of this land may be more than sufficient to retire our long-term debt and fully complete drainage and other needed improvements."

These quotes and other text in the newsletters lead me to believe that the Golf Club would encourage the building of a substantial development. Perhaps condos and townhouses like the Ironwood development that was built on Gorge Vale Golf Club land removed from the ALR a few years ago.

In this year's application, part of the parcel slated for removal from the ALR runs along the back fence of my property and those of four of my neighbours along Colville Road. In the March Golf Club newsletter, Mr. Fraser wrote:

"We are fairly confident that there will be no issues with the land withdrawal from the ALR the municipality of Esquimalt has been fully informed and we have been advised that they have no objections to the withdrawal."

I admire Mr. Fraser's confidence, but I have "issues" with this application and I know you will be hearing from more of your constituents about this. I am also disturbed by his expectation that the Township of Esquimalt will automatically support the application.

My husband and I bought our home with the assumption that the golf course would remain in its current state, that is, within the ALR and I would like it to stay there.

We benefit from lovely views over the golf course and there are no residences behind us, which gives us more privacy than many properties have. If a development is built along our back fence our views will be blocked, or limited and unattractive. and we will experience a lack of privacy. We are also concerned that our property value will be reduced by the proximity of the new building complex.

The land behind our fence was originally something akin to a marshland; a large shallow lake during the winter wet season and a boggy area in the summer. Surrounding properties were prone to flooding. To its credit, the Golf Club dug out a large pond to drain the land. This pond is now a habitat for two kinds of ducks, great blue herons, redwing blackbirds, other birds and aquatic animals. It is right in the middle of the land slated for removal from the ALR. If the land is developed, I assume an attempt will be made to fill in the pond, but where will the water go? Will our property be susceptible to flooding? And what will happen to the wildlife that both golf club members and their neighbours enjoy?

We are also worried that the larger neighbourhood will be disrupted by:

- the annoyances of a large construction project,
- new access roads that may have to be built into the complex from Colville, Tillicum, and/ or Craigflower Roads,
- increased traffic, both during construction and ever afterwards.

In addition, given the Ironwood precedent, it's possible the Golf Club will find it necessary to boost its finances by regularly removing more pieces of land from the ALR and developing them. In that case, its neighbours face an unsettled future; unsure about when the next project will start and how it will affect them. Living on tenterhooks is no way to live.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Bill Brown, Esquimalt's Director of Development Services, for the assistance and information he has provided to us and our neighbours on this issue.

Sincerely,



Deborah Walker

cc/ Mr. Frank Leonard, Chair, Agricultural Land Commission
Linda Michaluk, Vice Chair, Island Panel, ALC