

Terry Barker
1028 Colville Rd
Victoria BC V9A 4P7

Monday, May-29-17

Barbara Desjardins – Mayor
Township of Esquimalt
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, BC V9A 3P1

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT		
For Information:		
<input type="checkbox"/> CAO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor/Council	
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RECEIVED: JUN 01 2017		
Referred: <u>Dev't Services</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> For Action	<input type="checkbox"/> For Response	<input type="checkbox"/> COTW
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Agenda	<input type="checkbox"/> IC

Dear Mayor Desjardins ,

Application to ALC 54801-Gorge Vale Golf course

I am concerned about the proposed removal of a section of the Gorge Vale golf course from the ALR, the section backs on to the rear of my property and the reason for removal from the ALR is to sell for development to assist the course in its financial woes (Same reason as in 1994), a copy of that decision is attached for easy reference. We were given a copy of this when we purchased our property in 2007 and it influenced us at that time.

I believe that the benefit of the golf course to the community as a buffer in this urban landscape cannot be over stated, and whilst the previous development was 23 years ago I am also concerned about development by stealth and all the obvious environmental impacts this creates, which will be well known to you.

The presumptive text in three consecutive newsletters published by the golf course, copies attached, also concerns me and I wonder why they thought owners of 5 properties would not be against such a proposal? And why they state *“We are fairly confident that there will be no issues with the land withdrawal from the ALR. We have undertaken soil tests that indicate the land is of no significant agricultural value and the municipality of Esquimalt has been fully informed and we have been advised that they have no objections to the withdrawal.”* Creates an enormous concern in my mind as to where they obtained this view before a formal process? Also *“that indicate the land is of no significant agricultural value”* that is a matter of opinion and the soil report indicates the section behind my property does indeed contain potential for agriculture.

The Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) was introduced for the explicit purposes of PERMANENTLY protecting lands deemed to have soils values suitable for farming or forestry. What is important is that by its very nature, it affords British Columbia residents an expectation or level of confidence in making land use decisions in that removal of land from the ALR is uncommon and should not occur other than to benefit farming or forestry, certainly not for housing.

The ALR is a high-level form of protection that residents should be able to reasonably rely on, including a decision in purchasing a home.

We purchased our property after a deliberate investigation and on learning that the land which provides us a view is protected by the ALR. To not be able to rely on this is an infringement of our rights as a land owner.

To remove this land from the ALR is to remove arable of land for the purposes of urbanization and development, precisely what the ALR was introduced to protect against.

If this application is granted, it establishes a precedent for a future applications by the golf course operators. It is common knowledge that the ALR has been weakened in recent years by piecemeal applications for removal for golf course purposes and there has been considerable public kickback about that because the incremental removal of protection of arable lands, although claimed for golf course purposes, has involved change of land use to residential, industrial, commercial or institutional uses. By removing ALR protection, it becomes much easier for the land owner to utilize the land for other purposes.

We made a well-considered decision to purchase our property after investigating and learning that the land which affords us a view, is protected by the ALR, **we relied on that fact.**

Removal from the ALR is contrary to protection that we reasonably contemplated and it financially damages us.

Is there is a "Covenant" registered against the Title of the golf course property which states the land must be used for golf course. If so, that strengthens the point that our land rights are being damaged. If not, there should be no change in land use of the golf course permitted. And that a Covenant be placed against the remaining lands to protect rights of neighbouring land owners

Thank you for taking time to read this letter

Sincerely,



Terry Barker

CC : Mr Frank Leonard Chair of ALC

& Linda Michaluk Island Panel ALC

Mitzi Dean MLA



Gorge Vale Golf Club



March 2017



President's Message

Recently our Junior Coordinator, Andy Reljic, was granted a Distinguished Service Award by the BC Golf Association for his efforts at Gorge Vale. The award presented by the President of the BCGA, Patrick Kelly, noted Andy's success in more than doubling the number of Junior golfers in the Club and particularly noted his exceptional work with juniors from our neighbouring First Nations communities. We have certainly appreciated Andy's efforts but it is nice to know that he is recognised more broadly by the BC golf community.

As also noted in the award, thanks to Andy, for the first time in our history the Club has a good relationship with our First Nations neighbours and many of them will be our future members.

On other issues, some members have noticed and raised questions regarding the sign on the Tillicum Road fence serving notice of 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. This Committee was tasked with reviewing our entire property and identifying potential lands that could be considered by us for sale and development. The Committee identified a parcel of several acres that runs along Craigflower Road from the present Ironwood Development, encompassing our parking lot and Clubhouse area and running down Tillicum Road. This parcel is, in the Committee's view, the most desirable and valuable land that could be made



available by the Club while minimizing, to the extent possible, impacts on the golf course.

The Committee also recommended removing this land from the ALR to improve its attractiveness to developers and enhance its market value. We are now proceeding with this recommendation.

We are fairly confident that there will be no issues with the land withdrawal from the ALR. We have undertaken soil tests that indicate the land is of no significant agricultural value and the municipality of Esquimalt has been fully informed and we have been advised that they have no objections to the withdrawal. However, we understand that the process to withdraw the land will still take three to six months or even longer.

Once that has been completed expressions of interest for development on this land area will be solicited. Clearly all expressions of interest will be carefully reviewed. Any financial and potential benefit will be weighed against any potential costs to the club. This includes replacing any infrastructure and re-design or re-routing of the golf course, if this is necessary. If an expression of interest comes forward that your Board believes is strongly beneficial to the Club, a detailed proposal will be developed and brought forward for your consideration. No Club land can be sold for any purpose without support of at least two thirds of the members through special resolution.

I would like to think that the next steps will be completed quickly but we must be realistic. Major developments do not happen overnight and it may be some years before any land sale is considered or development occurs. At the same time, I believe our large land base and convenient location are key strengths of the Club. These will eventually help fund improved playing conditions on the golf course and ensure the Club's long-term future. However, some patience may be required!

Sandy Fraser
Club President



Gorge Vale Golf Club



APRIL 2017



President's Message

As a follow-up to last month's message regarding our application to take some of the golf course land out of the Agricultural Land Reserve, your Board is establishing a Committee to conduct a "Request for Proposal" process for potential development on these lands. The Committee will be made up of member volunteers with expertise in land development and related activities.

We believe that there will be substantial interest in the land given its convenient location with respect to the city centre. However, this remains to be seen. Also, to proceed any proposal will require support from the municipality of Esquimalt after public review and appropriate zoning. All proposals will also need to be carefully evaluated in light of the Club's goals and needs. We will keep you updated as things proceed and please remember that no development of these lands will proceed without you the members' approval.

On another note, I have received a couple of negative comments on our new website feature which advises members of their tee times through email. These members find this practice unnecessary and irritating. Personally, I like this new practice because I know my tee time without having to access the website. However, I can understand that there are different strokes for different folks. If this is an irritant to the majority, we can certainly stop this new practice. Let us know your feelings via the online comment card ([Click Here](#)) or email directors@gorgevaledgolf.com.

Also please note that the tee time notification emails clearly state:

NOTICE: Please DO NOT reply to this email. This message has been auto-generated and cannot process a reply.

If you want to cancel your time, please login and

remove your name from the tee time. Responding to this notification email will not do the job.

Sandy Fraser
Club President



Green Committee

It has been a hard winter for us golfers and for our course.

Considering how difficult a winter it has been, the limited staff have coped quite well to keep our course in as good a condition as it is, but finally we are starting to see signs of spring and the course is starting to dry out. Think heat and wind. Scott will start bringing his staff back to work shortly, but in order to get the course back in shape as quickly as possible, we need the help of every member to pitch in and do your part. The following are some suggestions that will leave the course in a better condition than when you arrived:

- Pick up that piece of garbage,
- Refrain from throwing cigarette butts on the course – very harmful for birds and wildlife,
- Repair a few ball marks on each green,
- Tap sand off your shoes after leaving the sand trap and before walking onto the green,
- Do a little extra raking when you are leaving a sand trap,
- Sand as many fairway divots as possible,
- Follow the push and power cart policies,
- And in general, walk in areas that are less traveled, particularly around the greens

Lastly, there was a change in our Collective Agreement with the Bargaining Unit last fall that eliminated the restrictions on members working in our gardens. The Green Committee will organize gardening volunteer assignments, which we will announce in the next newsletter.

Rick Jess
Green Committee



Gorge Vale Golf Club



May 2017



President's Message

This past month, two concerns were raised which may be broadly shared by members. Your Board would like to share their collective thoughts.

First, although members are happy that the Club has invested in a trencher, the concern is that it may take years before we see a measurable difference in course conditions.

While we understand this concern, we believe it is misplaced. The drainage problems are not equal across the golf course. There are certainly some areas where the problems are extreme but there are many areas where problems are moderate and even some where the problems are fairly minor. By draining the extreme areas, moderate and minor areas will immediately benefit as well. Even a very modest program will start to show significant benefits in the very near future.

Second, concern has been raised that we may be in the worst financial shape of any golf course in the Victoria area. This is certainly not the case but again it seems to be an opinion by some both in and outside Club membership.

As I have stressed consistently to members, our present financial situation is not ideal, but it is manageable. Also, golf clubs across North America have been struggling with reduced participation and over-building of facilities during the last nine years. Clubs in Victoria have been no different, some faring better than others. We really do not know without detailed financial information where we stand relative to the other private and public golf clubs in town.

What we do know is that Gorge Vale has made substantial financial progress over the last five years. We have brought our cash costs in line with our cash revenues through careful cost controls. We have

also retired over \$360,000 of the Club's long-term debt over this period. In addition, Gorge Vale has certain advantages over other Club's that will stand us well financially in both the more immediate and longer term.

We undertook and completed a major renovation of the golf course including our green complexes fifteen years ago. Some of the other Club's in Victoria still need to proceed with similar renovations, at some point in the future, and at substantial cost. Also, we have 144 acres of prime property within ten minutes of downtown Victoria. This is a larger property than many Clubs in Victoria and much larger than required for an eighteen-hole facility. As confirmed by our Land Use Committee we do have property surplus to our needs and some of this is potentially extremely valuable. Your Board is taking steps to remove some of our land from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and 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.

In short, our financial situation may not be ideal but it is certainly manageable! When comparing golf clubs, you may note that two have closed and most others are having some financial challenges not unlike our own. Our Future is Bright!

Sandy Fraser
Club President

Hole in One/Milestones Congratulations!

Doug Hunt	Shot Age	77	Apr 24
Connie Dykstra	Hole in One	#10	Apr 22
Ron Blasner	Shot Age	83	Apr 18
Andrew Tims	Hole in One	#16	Apr 16
Mark Unwin	Hole in One	#14	Apr 14