

5 Minute Presentation to Standing Policy Committee Meeting—July 2, 2014

McCall Lake Study and update—by Brian Hughes

The general purpose of my comments is to express my disappointment with the City and Councillors to allow its reputation to be harmed because of its approach in dealing with McCall Lake Golf Course and the Capital needs of Golf Course Operations. The initial report on Municipal Golf Sustainability is debatable but certainly narrowly focused. Given a mandate, most citizens could develop substantial but sometimes short sighted reasons to close any recreational facility.

The POINT I am trying to make is it is the responsibility of elected Council to act in a principled manner when dealing with a major recreational facility which many Calgary citizens use. This means from the beginning, Council should have looked totally at the BIG PICTURE before making its initial assessment of redeveloping or even selling McCall Lake Golf Course.

Council should have recognized from the very outset the closure of McCall Lake could have severe negative ramifications and largely objectionable Citizen's feedback. Accordingly, Council should have looked at all alternatives when dealing with the complexity of the issue. Of course, one of the solutions would be McCall Lake becoming a tax supported facility. Having a proactive approach and weighing the pros and cons of the subject matter would likely have been more appreciated by Calgary golfers before arbitrarily recommending a proposed redevelopment.

The following are some Rhetorical Questions as part of my presentation.

Question 1: Does Calgary and its Council lack the foresight to conclude in the next 10-20 years Calgary will likely require even more golf facilities due to population growth?

Comments—Since the opening of McCall Lake in 1981, Calgary's population has grown from 593,352 to 1,149,552. Most major communities have more than 1 regulation 18-hole city golf course. Calgary prides itself on its many outdoor and indoor facilities but there would be a severe lack of foresight by Calgary to close one course like McCall Lake without having a planned short term replacement strategy.

We note the following have regulation length 18 hole-golf courses:

Edmonton—2 (population 817,498) Vancouver—3 Regina—2 Saskatoon—2
Thunder Bay—2 (population 121,596)

Closing a regulation length (6693 yards) McCall Lake 18-hole will only put undue pressure on the availability of prime tee-times at the only other regulation length (6576 yards) Maple Ridge and to some degree the intermediate (5,181 yards) Shaganappi Golf 18-hole golf course.

Recreational Mandate:

The spirit of Calgary's approved Recreation Master Plan states "provide recreational golf opportunities for youth, entry level players, families and recreational golfers within Calgary intended to encourage participation and improve health and well-being". Closing McCall Lake Golf Course goes against this philosophy.

Question 2: Why isn't McCall Lake part of the City's future tax funded & supported recreational facility?

Comments—Based on Business Plans and Budgets 2012-2014 for Community Services & Protective Services, the City of Calgary's golf courses are the only recreational facilities NOT tax supported.

