

DISTRICT OF SAANICH
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
HELD IN THE GARTH HOMER CENTRE AUDITORIUM
813 DARWIN AVENUE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2014 AT 9:30 AM

Present:

Chair: Mayor Leonard
Council: Councillors Brice, Brownoff, Derman, Gerrard, Murdock, Sanders, Wade and Wergeland
Staff: Paul Murray, Chief Administrative Officer; Doug Henderson, Director of Parks & Recreation; Donna Dupas, Legislative Manager; and Andrea Park, Senior Committee Clerk

**RESUMPTION OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
HELD ON NOVEMBER 28, 2013 AND JANUARY 23, 2014.**

3040-20
Cedar Hill Park Clay
Tennis Court
Proposal

CEDAR HILL PARK CLAY TENNIS COURT PROPOSAL

Report of the Director of Parks & Recreation dated November 15, 2013 providing an overview of the proposal from the Cedar Hill Clay Court Tennis Society to operate a clay court tennis facility in Cedar Hill Park.

PUBLIC INPUT:

M. Adams, Ansell Road, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- The private nature of the club and its high initiation fee are a concern; the system in place for squash requires an annual fee which is preferable.
- The interest free loan, with only 1500 hours of court time given to the municipality, the location close to the creek, are concerns.
- Other options are available to the Society.

A. Cleaver, Kashtan Place, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- The tennis courts will offer benefits such as a healthy lifestyle, new players, revenue, and additional tennis programs.
- This could be another successful public/private partnership for the municipality.

B. Bardua, Shelbourne Street, stated:

- The Clay Court Tennis Society plans to make the clay courts a long term facility for the community.

A. Kirkaldy, Hillview Avenue, stated:

- Council is entrusted to make the best decision for the community and to continue to provide broad public access to the recreation centre, the park and its natural areas.
- The tennis courts would best be located on private lands.

B. Whelan, Salsbury Way, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- No trees will be lost, concerns about Bowker Creek have been addressed, the baseball field is not well used and the land will be leased from Saanich.

- Revenue from the use of the courts will compensate the municipality for the loan.

D. Campbell, Diane Road, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- Financial issues, the impact on Bowker Creek, the use of water are concerns.
- The park is a jewel used by many.
- A fair and balanced review with meaningful consultation is needed, as well as a master plan for the park.

M. Robb, Doncaster Drive, stated:

- An independent expert to review the facts would be advisable as well as an environmental impact study and an economic analysis.
- The health of the land is paramount.

B. Collier, Tolmie Avenue, stated:

- This is not the right location or appropriate use of the land.
- When a disabled group is displaced for a tennis club, we should consider our values.
- Bus service is poor; therefore, tennis players will drive to the facility; parking at the recreation centre will be overtaxed

R. Del Rosario, Kashtan Place, stated:

- Their family uses the trail and the recreation centre and is involved in tennis at a high level.
- At first the PISCES facility in Saanich was a concern to many but in the long term, the benefits are now clear.
- This facility will bring revenue and any environmental impacts would be less than those from the golf course.
- The Tennis Society proposal is respectful of the community and will allow children to develop in the sport.

P. Cohen, Glasgow Avenue, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- Expert opinions regarding clay tennis courts warn of silt runoff, the need to hire a pro, instructors and maintenance workers, which could be an expensive proposition for Saanich.
- It would be preferable to invest in a seniors bus.

T. Anderson, Summit Avenue, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- Greenspace should be preserved for the future.

G. Anderson, Summit Avenue, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- The location is wrong; a small private club wants to use parkland for free.
- The chip trail is more inclusive; leave natural greenspace as it is, to benefit more people.

R. McArthur, Dallas Road, stated:

- As a tennis player in Saanich, he supports the proposed tennis facility.
- This is an excellent, central location for many tennis players.

R. Evans, Gorge Road West, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- All the speakers support health and well being.
- Clay courts are common in other countries and families can play together.
- This is an opportunity for forward thinking.

B. Oldfield, Echo Drive, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- Good location for this facility; the proposed partnership is a good approach.

T. Gelsthorpe, Wicklow Place, stated:

- The baseball field is the only large, flat area in the park and water is retained there.
- Open space is good for unstructured play and for everyone to refresh and renew.
- Clay may be cheaper to build but is expensive to maintain and uses chemicals.

T. Legge, Princess Avenue, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- Clay courts are best for all ages of player and is the norm internationally.
- The proposed facility could become the number 1 facility in BC and will offer economic benefits.

M. Brown, Cloverdale Avenue, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- This is the wrong location, there may be environmental issues, and parking for tournaments would be a problem.
- This proposal did not follow the usual Saanich Council process; having a master plan for Cedar Hill Park would have prevented this.
- Clay courts could replace the hard surfaced courts elsewhere in Saanich.

M. Nichols, Aidie Terrace, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- Young athletes will support and benefit from this facility.

D. Brix, Haliburton Road, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- Raquet sports are encouraged by Saanich.

J. Paris, Rockland Avenue, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- Clay courts are easier on the body; the facility will be of benefit to the community.
- Most costs will be paid by the Society; open space will remain.

R. James, Camrose Crescent, stated:

- Opposed to the tennis proposal.
- This is a beautiful park facing pressure for more facilities; a long term plan for the park is needed.
- Public/private partnerships will become common but should provide more revenue to the municipality.

L. Duberry, Oakmount Road, stated:

- Opposed to the clay court proposal.
- The proposed loan is not appropriate; moneys could be spent more wisely, perhaps on the outdated public works yard or on a fountain in the park.

B. Turner, Margo Place, stated:

- Supports the proposal.

B. Latham, Judge Place, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- As a tennis fan, attends world class events and doesn't want such a facility here.
- The best legacy is a green Saanich.

M. Bachman, Ascot Drive, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal and the use of public parkland by a private club.
- Cedar Hill Park is a legacy for all to enjoy; a comprehensive master plan would enable Saanich to provide a vision for these lands.
- There are risks associated with this proposal and even with the best of intentions, the results may not be what was intended.
- The maintenance of clay courts is a concern; the Cedar Hill Golf Course maintenance has caused environmental concerns.

R. Herr, Durban Street, stated:

- Clay courts would be an asset to the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre.
- This use is no different from other public facilities.
- Concerns raised have been addressed in the Tennis Society's proposal which is well thought out and deserves support.

J. Haffey, James Heights, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- The Society's request exceeds what is appropriate; a private partner is needed.
- We already have sufficient tennis facilities; if a change of use is proposed, then a proper planning process should be undertaken.

J. Saxton, Oakcrest Drive, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal no matter what surface is planned.
- This field is the only free space left in the park - the lungs of the park.

A. Case, Beach Drive, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal due to the toxic chemicals which may be used.
- We must first ensure the creek is safe before going ahead.

M. Case, Beach Drive, stated:

- Works in health promotion and supports sports facilities and outdoor space but a site selection process and environmental impact assessment are needed prior to any approval of the tennis proposal.

D. Ho, Shorncliffe Heights, stated:

- In favour of the proposal.
- The field is not well used and this would be an excellent use of the property.
- It would be preferable to resolve any environmental and financial concerns first; Council could just approve in principle.

P. Carr, Darwin Avenue, stated:

- Tennis is a neighbourhood-friendly sport.
- The Tennis Society has made a commitment to build an environmentally friendly facility.

P. Sinclair, Judge Place, stated:

- Opposed to the use of public land for a private club; many players are not Saanich residents.
- Clay courts could have a detrimental impact on Bowker Creek.
- The municipality had not previously communicated there was a need to improve on the existing uses in the park.

J. Owen, Maplewood Drive, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- He can continue to play tennis on a hard-surfaced court.

J. Davoren, Judge Place, stated:

- Opposed to the facility; it will have an impact on the chip trail which is well used.
- The proposal is too risky financially; there is insufficient information to make a good decision.

D. Holden, Shoreway, stated:

- This is a well thought out proposal from the Tennis Society which will enhance an existing Saanich facility.

T. Abata, Garden Grove Place, stated:

- The Tennis Society proposal is sound; the engineering and design will address concerns over Bowker Creek.
- The necessary permits will have to be acquired before proceeding.
- There are many benefits to the lifelong sport of tennis.

B. Clark, Fairfield resident, stated:

- The fencing and materials in the baseball field now are comparable to what will be there if the tennis facility is approved; it is just a different game.

H. Hodgson, Kerryview Drive, stated:

- Supports the clay courts.
- We have an active community here and youth will benefit the most from

these facilities.

- The tennis courts will be an extension of the Recreation Centre and its programs.

M. Goodger, Queensbury Avenue, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- Tennis is a great sport but he cannot support a private club on public land.

A. Barnes, Cordova Bay Road, stated;

- Supports the proposal which is an opportunity for Saanich.
- Clay courts are suited to our climate and demographic; the facility will be affordable and accessible.

N. Thompson, Gosper Crescent, stated:

- Supports the tennis facility which will be well used in contrast to the ball diamond.
- The clay courts will be available to the public as well.

S. Hays, Richardson Street, stated:

- Supports the tennis facility.

T. Newton, Shorncliffe Drive, stated:

- Opposed to the facility.
- Ball diamond use has fallen off but the space requires maintenance; it also serves as the drainage area for the park.
- Recreation Centre itself may need to expand in future.

L. Netter, Oakcrest Drive, stated:

- Opposed to the clay courts.
- There is unstructured use of the space now as opposed to the one use.
- Keep the park for public multi-use rather than space dedicated to tennis.

D. Robertson, Clovelly Terrace, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- Does not support the use of public land for a private club and has concerns about the grant and loan and environmental impacts.

M. Brown, Clovelly Terrace, stated:

- Concerned with process; this proposal was not the result of a robust public consultation process by the Parks Department but the result of private interest; such a facility is not included in the Parks Recreation & Culture Master Plan, which involved extensive public consultation.
- The Society has not been asked to pay an economic rent for the use of the land; real public access is a concern.
- Park space has diminished.

A. Mekelburg, Clovelly Terrace, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- Lack of a master plan for the park is an issue.
- Public space must be accessible to the public.

- Taxpayer may be left with costs.
- Disabled athletes need the convenience of a field at this location.
- Alternatives to clay courts are available.

C. Bone, Oakcrest Drive, stated:

- The choice is between four large fenced in rectangles or open greenspace.
- Environmental impacts are a concern.
- It is also forward-thinking to protect large green areas contiguous to a dense city.

J. Funky-Furber, Arbutus Road, stated:

- Process is important.
- Council may listen to the community at large or powerful proponents of tennis.
- The common theme stated by residents is that tennis is fine but not these courts in Cedar Hill Park.

E. Borek, Tudor Avenue, stated:

- A better analysis of the proposal is necessary; economic benefits appear to be most important.
- Rules are meant to protect the public interest.
- Greenspace has value just because it exists; Saanich exhibits a long term view in other respects, such as for infrastructure replacement.

H. Blum, Lansdowne Road, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- Tennis is not an elitist sport but a reasonable and affordable one; clay courts are better for the body.
- The facility will complement the recreation centre and enhance an area hardly used.

A. Easson, Cross Country Coach, Mount Doug High School, stated:

- Cross country is a sanctioned sport with regular races held in Victoria.
- Cedar Hill Park is one of the few appropriate venues; they require a contiguous open space for the extended start line.
- Their sport has the same healthy, active goals as tennis.

J. Valkhard, Passage Way, stated:

- Supports the clay court proposal.

S. Valkhard, Passage Way, stated:

- Supports the clay courts proposal.
- Family has used Saanich tennis programs; the sport is affordable.

J. Newton, Shorncliffe Drive, stated:

- Opposed to the clay court proposal.
- The Shelbourne Valley Action Plan proposes increased density and mixed use but with no proposed increase in parkland.
- For social, environmental and financial reasons, keep the greenspace as is.

- L. Jaerlich, Cordero Crescent, stated:
- Supports the tennis proposal.
 - Will use the clay courts regularly; the facility will be a jewel for the CRD.
- A. Vogt, Forrester Street, stated:
- Opposed to the clay courts.
 - Concerned about the use of public land for a private club, the municipal contribution, the limited public access and the possible impact on the natural environment of the park.
 - The moneys would be better spent on other alternatives.
- C. Blum, Lansdowne Road, stated:
- She is a promoter of outdoor activity and has purchased a membership in the Clay Court Society; the Society will work with the municipality to find an alternate playing field for the Special Olympics group.
- E. Williams, Knight Street, stated:
- Opposed to a private club using public land.
 - Saanich is a leader in its supply of parkland and has created a jewel in this park and its recreation and arts centre.
- N. May, Queensbury Avenue, stated:
- The dictionary definition of park describes what our community has here in Cedar Hill Park; an area maintained in its natural state as a public property.
 - Leave the space as it is; another playground or art space is not needed.
- E. Lamb, Windsor Avenue, stated:
- Supports the proposal and its many benefits.
- G. McQuiggan, Kinross Street, stated:
- Supports the tennis courts.
- S. Gaskill, Blenkinsop Road, stated:
- Opposed to the proposal.
 - The land is valuable to the well being of regular park users.
- L. Moore, Camrose Crescent, stated:
- Her family enjoys the outdoors in Cedar Hill Park and prefers that it stay as it is, for its neighbours.
 - The greenspace benefits everyone.
- M. Moore, Camrose Crescent, stated:
- Enjoys walking, biking, and running in the park and wants the greenspace to remain undeveloped for such activities.
- C. Moore, Camrose Crescent, stated:
- Keep the field for everyone's use.
- J. Moore, Camrose Crescent, stated:
- Opposed to the proposal.

- Immediate residents should be consulted before considering such a proposal.
- The park is a natural gem; it is important for children to have free imaginative play and this park provides an open and natural area.

K. Moore, Camrose Crescent, stated:

- The proposal from the Tennis society was well done but most residents do not want this site developed; the Society proposal excludes others.
- There are possible negative environmental impacts.
- This underutilized field fills a need and we must not ignore the Special Olympic athletes.

R. Smith, Kings Road, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal and suggests the Society consider an alternative site.
- He commends Saanich for holding these extensive public sessions.

K. Daffner, San Clemente Place, stated:

- Supports the tennis proposal.
- The concern over private use of public land could be mitigated by increasing the number of court hours offered to Saanich by the club.

K. Healey, Quadra Street, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- Reasons for concern include the loss of greenspace, the effect on Bowker Creek, the waste of water, the questionable economic viability and deficiencies in the process of bringing this project forward.
- This proposal does not provide substantial benefit to the community; nothing has to happen to this land.

E. Shaw, Crown Crescent, stated:

- There is not enough information for a decision; the proposal is far from ready.

L. Burns, Camrose Crescent, stated:

- The Parks Department may have been earmarked this site for tennis years ago; whether it is an appropriate use of the land is not clear.
- True public consultation was lacking in the process.
- A master plan and expert assessments along with vigorous public consultation are required for such a project.
- The park serves many purposes to many people.

D. Walsh, Adanac Street, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- The land will not belong to the Tennis Society; the club will cover its expenses.
- Clay is a natural material and will not be the problem anticipated by some speakers.
- The model of private /public partnerships will become a necessary tool.

S. Blake, Cedar Hill Road, stated:

- This public land must be preserved; there are already building problems to be attended to at the Arts Centre.

Mayor Leonard announced that the meeting would adjourn at 12:30 pm and resume following a break, at 1:15 pm.

The meeting resumed at 1:15 pm with Mayor Leonard in the Chair.

Public Input continued:

P. Corby, Judge Place, stated;

- Opposed to the tennis proposal.
- A private facility using public land and the financial help from Saanich are concerns; unsustainable tax hikes and fees are already being experienced.
- The clay surface could cause injuries creating a liability issue.

A. Foster, Salsbury Way, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- The proposed grant is inappropriate; the golf course needs better drainage.
- Clay court problems and process deficiencies have been outlined.
- This the wrong location at the wrong time.

R. Brook, Shakespeare Street, stated:

- Supports the clay courts.
- The Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan calls for increasing partnerships with not-for-profit groups.
- The Saanich permit process would require careful reviews of the plans.
- This is a poor site for other purposes and the tennis facility is best partnered with the recreation centre.

S. Forrester, Central Saanich, stated:

- Supports the proposal; it fits well with the recreation centre use.

P. Young, Quadra Street, stated:

- It is time for a change; give the clay courts a chance.

F. Graham, Gibson Court, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- Wants greenspace preserved; this is too small a site for a world class tennis facility.
- Reserve the land for future food production.

C. Burns, Camrose Crescent, stated:

- There are many reasons to reject the tennis proposal .
- Saanich has created the amenities that the Tennis Society hopes to share.
- This is irreplaceable greenspace.
- There was a lack of community consultation before the proposal was put forward.

A. Radisavljevic, Doral Place, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- We are a community of smaller groups with their own interests; tennis players should not be left out.
- Membership fees are necessary to reduce costs; public/private partnerships work well.

H. Charania, 757 Genevieve Road, stated:

- Supports the proposal.
- There was sufficient public consultation, public land will not be lost forever, the land is presently underutilized, the grant is not excessive, park plans evolve, staff can review the environmental concerns and develop a lease and loan agreement.
- Private/public partnerships work well.

D. Carriere, Clovelly Terrace, stated:

- This is a poor location for the tennis facility; it covers too large an area close to the slope and creek; spectators for world class events could not be accommodated..
- The Tennis Society should look for a more appropriate site.

T. Rose, Beckton Road, stated:

- The financing of the proposal is a concern as is the financial contribution from the municipality.
- These tennis courts are not needed; it would be preferable to use the money elsewhere.

J. Jarmula, Simmons Drive, stated:

- He is an architect and assisted in the design of the tennis facility.
- This will be an affordable facility using less than 20% of the park area and offering a fitting transition between the park and the recreation centre.
- Clay courts are common; the environmental concerns have been exaggerated.
- The project cannot proceed unless it meets provincial and municipal requirements.

G. Lohbrunner, Doncaster Drive, stated:

- The tennis facility would be a major change and needs careful assessment; it would have a major impact on the Recreation Centre parking and washrooms.
- The park serves many purposes for many people.
- Current tennis courts are adequate.
- If the proposed facility is to serve the Region, then a regional assessment to determine the best site is advisable.

J. Ham, Niagara Street, stated:

- Existing tennis facilities do not meet the demand from tennis players.
- The Tennis Society proposal was well researched as was their selection of this location and he supports the project.

G. Morton, resident, stated:

- The Saanich Squash Club has a similar private/public partnership with the municipality; membership fees support the club and assist with the development of junior players; the club also produces revenue for Saanich.
- This is a great opportunity to add another dimension to the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre.

R. Attwell, Adeline Place, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal.
- Public process is important; if due diligence had been done, there would have been no need for these meetings.
- The community is divided.

J. Lamb, Linwood Avenue, stated:

- The public greenspace has multiple uses and it is inappropriate to change to a single use.
- The tennis facility will have an impact on Bowker Creek; there are financial and aesthetic concerns.

I. Graham, Dean Avenue, stated:

- The tennis facility is not a good fit for this site; the proposal has become too divisive.
- This park is a public asset - not for private development.

D. Nagle, Aspen Place, stated:

- Opposed to the proposal due to the loss of greenspace and vista; the public funding is not justified.
- Website information published by Saanich did not adequately reflect opposing viewpoints on this proposal.

Mayor Leonard thanked everyone for taking the time to express their views.

COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS:

Councillor Derman stated:

- He treasures recreation and sport and their health advantages.
- There are concerns about the impact of the tennis facility on trail usage and on the Arts Centre and its future use of this open space.
- If tennis tournaments are part of the plan, the Recreation Centre will not be able to accommodate the parking.
- There are environmental concerns over the Creek and watershed.
- A comprehensive financial and market analysis is needed and assurances that the facility will be operated properly.
- A comprehensive master plan for our parks is not anticipated soon; a policy is needed, whereby a public process is triggered when a substantive change is proposed.

MOVED by Councillor Derman and Seconded by Councillor Brice: “That it be recommended that Council not support the proposal from the Cedar Hill Clay Court Tennis Society to develop and operate a clay court tennis facility in Cedar Hill Park.”

Councillor Brice stated:

- This proposal has been a challenge within the community and she will not support it.
- A strong need for tennis facilities had not been previously identified; concerns have been raised about the upkeep of clay courts, the loss of open space, the long term viability of the club.
- These fields do not have to be designated for a specific need or use; time will allow for new ideas.
- This is not the location in the best interests of the community in the long term.

Councillor Gerrard stated:

- He does not support the tennis facility in this location; a strong case has not been made as to its benefit to the community.
- A Saanich survey determined that only a small percentage of residents were dissatisfied with tennis facilities.
- The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan promotes the preservation of greenspace.
- Perhaps more interaction between the community and municipal staff with the aim of reinvigorating this land, may now take place.

Councillor Murdock stated:

- He would like to acknowledge the time spent and effort made by the Tennis Society and its supporters and by the speakers in opposition; the decision to be made is not about tennis but about land use.
- The Tennis Society proposal could work elsewhere in the Region.
- The community enthusiasm expressed for this park could now be channelled toward determining a good use for the space.

Councillor Wade stated:

- The many letters received about this proposal have given her a good understanding of the flavour of the community.
- A significant concern raised was about the Special Olympics group; we haven't found a way to properly accommodate them although it is a Saanich goal to integrate all individuals into recreation opportunities.
- As an effective use of tax dollars, private/public partnerships can be a good tool.

Councillor Sanders stated:

- The popularity of any sport is cyclical and for her this proposal was about land use and the best use in the long term for future generations.
- Many concerns have been raised including the financial aspects of the proposal, the fact that the courts would be out of context with the natural area, the uncertain environmental impacts; also, the Cedar Hill precinct is a new concept and it may need room to grow.
- She is not convinced this proposal is the best option.

Councillor Brownoff stated:

- She appreciates having had the opportunity to hear from both the Tennis Society and the community.
- The municipality must try to balance all users and private/public partnerships can be used to accomplish this.
- A management plan is needed for this park, with a process to be followed in the future; perhaps the users should be consulted first.
- There is nothing wrong with unstructured greenspace.

Councillor Wergeland stated:

- Although there has been criticism of the process, many have been able to participate.
- The best use of the land to benefit the largest part of the community is desired.
- We need not rush to decide on another use for this open space; it can be left as it is for now and for the future.
- The clay courts could be of regional benefit but have not been shown to benefit the local community.
- He cannot support the tennis proposal.

Mayor Leonard stated:

- The Tennis Society project needed to be a winning proposition for both tennis players and the community; unfortunately, it has divided the community and not won public support.
- It would have been a different experience if the proposal could have built a sense of community.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.

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CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate

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MUNICIPAL CLERK