

Mayor Lois Jackson and Council
Corporation of Delta
4500 Clarence Taylor Crescent
Delta, BC Canada V4K 3E2

July 26, 2007

Dear Mayor Jackson and Council:

Re: Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club Redevelopment

I am a soils specialist with over 20 years experience and most of it in British Columbia. I am a member, in good standing, of the BC Institute of Agrologists, a professional organization of technical and scientific experts in the field of agriculture. I have participated in the development of the Agricultural Area Plans for both Richmond and Summerland and have evaluated applications for second dwellings on agricultural land in Delta.

On behalf of the Tsawwassen Homeowners Association, I have reviewed the soils reports produced by Mr. Brian French, P.Ag. and EvECO Consultants, prepared in light of this project. Based on this review, it is reported in both soil reports, that the construction of the current golf course has apparently degraded at least some of the land for agricultural use such that it has been deemed as having little or no suitability for agricultural use. Hence, the reason why golf courses are no longer a permitted use within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). It seems that based on this apparent degradation for agricultural use, there is a request to exclude a part of it for a housing development and to compensate for the loss of golf course land to housing, the plan is to convert more land within the ALR into more golf course land.

The quality of the native soils on the land north of 16th Avenue also seems to be an issue in one of the soils reports. The greater part of the land proposed for expansion of the golf course (north of 16th Avenue) occurs on soils mapped as Spetifore, soils which have been or are in agricultural production to the north and east of this parcel. (Figure 4.1, Brian French report).

Some fill has been previously placed on the land north of 16th Avenue and because of the fill, this portion is also proposed for exclusion for more housing. There is a discrepancy between the two soils reports on the potential to reclaim this filled area and to use it for agricultural use.

It seems that several factors need to be addressed and questions asked and answered related to this proposed project:

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1) What message would it send to exclude land which is currently a golf course in the ALR, for housing? What message does this send to other golf course owners? How can Delta (or the Agricultural Land Commission [ALC]) say no to the next one if they allow this one?

2) If they allow this one, and therefore, can't say no to the others, how will this impact farming in the ALR? How will it affect the movement of farm equipment, for example, and other normal farm practices, as the areas are converted to residential neighborhoods?

3) What message does this send to developers? Answer: That land within the ALR can be excluded for residential development. This would encourage speculation and put further pressure on the ALR.

4) What message does this send to the general public who drive by and see agricultural land and golf courses changed to residential use?

5) What message will it send to the farmers next door and in the vicinity? The answer: That agriculture is at risk so they won't want to invest in agriculture over the long term as it will be a waste of money – farmers need security to farm and to invest in improvements in their land.

It seems that the best use of the land that is occupied by the existing golf course and has been in operation for an extended period of time, is to continue to use it as a golf course as damage to much of its agricultural potential has apparently already been done, at least to a part of it, according to both reports. The golf course has various amenities including a club house, dining facilities, pro shop, coffee shop, banquet facilities, parking areas, constructed ponds, a driving range, etc. It currently “hosts more than 300 such events each year”.

In terms of the land on Crescent Island, if it is suitable for agricultural use it seems it should be put in the ALR and if it is in the ALR, it should remain in the ALR. I hope that you will consider these points and questions carefully as you evaluate this project.

Yours truly,



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