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2160-03 - HHREX1

From: ()
Sent: April 26, 2009 9:05 PM
To: MayorandCouncil
Subject: Reg. Hugo ray park

Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: Cricket at Hugo Ray Park

The West Vancouver Cricket Club has made us aware of plans proposed by the Hugo Ray Park Society and being supported by the Parks Commissioner, Mr. Kevin Pike, to place artificial turf over a portion or the whole of the main cricket ground (identified by the West Vancouver Field Hockey Club as Fields #1 and #2) at Hugo Ray Park. As we understand it, the proposed re-turfing is intended to benefit primarily field hockey. We also understand that the plans are being opposed by the West Vancouver Cricket Club, and we wish to endorse their opposition for the reasons described below:

1. Hugo Ray Park is home to one of the finest cricket grounds in Canada—and arguably the very finest. It attracts cricketers of international caliber, who choose to play in West Vancouver primarily because of the opportunity to play on the main cricket ground.
2. West Vancouver Cricket Club is one of the most successful cricket clubs in Canada. In size, it can be considered one of the largest in the country, with 5 main teams, and approximately a dozen other subsidiary teams. Each season, league matches involving some 1750 players and officials will play cricket at Hugo Ray Park. West Vancouver CC has had an illustrious history in the West Vancouver community since its early days in Ambleside, and it has produced players who have represented British Columbia and Canada, and who have played cricket at the highest level.
3. Cricket itself is a growing sport internationally. No sport—with the exception of soccer—has the international and multicultural appeal of cricket. In fact, unlike field hockey, cricket draws its players from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds, including not only British, European, Australian and Kiwi players, but also East African, South African, West Indian, and South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan), to name the more prominent ones. Many of the players at Hugo Ray Park travel from suburban neighborhoods to practice and play cricket in West Vancouver.
4. Unlike field hockey, which is played over a couple of hours per game, cricket games take four times as long. Consequently, they attract four times less in participant traffic, and correspondingly less spectator traffic. As a result, cricket is a much more neighborhood-friendly sport than field hockey. Accordingly, we understand that the Residents are supportive of Cricket at Hugo Ray Park. We fully endorse this support.

5. Cricket cannot be played effectively on artificial turf, and in fact is rarely played on that surface. The reasons for this include the fact that cricket fielders are prone to serious injuries from falls and slide burns, and all competitive level cricket is played on natural grass. If the cricket grounds at Hugo Ray Park were to be artificially re-turfed for field hockey, those fields would effectively be lost to cricket.

6. The loss of the main cricket grounds to field hockey at Hugo Ray Park would be a devastating blow to the West Vancouver Cricket Club. It would mark the loss to cricket of one of the finest grounds in the country, and would without doubt curtail the ability of cricket to grow as a sport in West Vancouver. It would also mark a sad end to a community-friendly relationship of the sport with the neighborhood.

7. We strongly urge the District of West Vancouver to consider other options that are available to Field Hockey that will allow them to install an artificial playing. Please consider truly enhancing Hugo Ray Park for all user groups including the neighbors, by retaining the existing green space and placing the artificial field on Field #5 .

We strongly urge Mayor and Council to vote in opposition to any plans to place artificial turf on the cricket grounds at Hugo Ray Park, and to seek a solution that will preserve those grounds for cricket rather than discriminating against cricket in favor of a less neighborhood-friendly sport, over the objections of the Residents and at the expense of Cricket.

Yours truly,

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