

North Shore Curling Community
c/o Mr. Don Brundrett
3188 Brookridge Drive
North Vancouver, B.C.
V7R 3A8

(11)

August 31, 2009

Mayor Pamela Goldsmith-Jones and Members of Council
District of West Vancouver
750 – 17th Street
West Vancouver, BC
V7V 3T3

Dear Mayor Goldsmith-Jones and Members of Council:

Reference: Public Curling on the North Shore

This letter is written on behalf of approximately 565 active curlers on the North Shore and is a request to the three North Shore municipalities on behalf of the North Shore curling community to put in place a new long term agreement with the North Shore winter Club (NSWC) to enable public curling to continue at that facility after April, 2010.

At the present time the North Shore Winter Club (NSWC) is the only venue that offers the sport of curling to the public-at-large on the North Shore. The NSWC is a private facility that entered into a ten-year agreement with the North Vancouver Recreation Commission (NVRC) in June 1999, and opened its doors for non-members to curl at their excellent 8-sheet facility. This agreement expired in June, 2009. Prior to that date, all of the curlers at the Club were members only. However over the years this condition has drastically changed with over 90% of the curlers now being non-members and public curlers.

While revenue from curlers partially covers day-to-day operational and overhead expenses, it has been necessary for members of the NSWC to substantially subsidize the curling program to permit curling to continue as a viable sport at the Club. The NSWC has served notice that the Club will no longer be doing so after the 2009-2010 season and therefore public curling will cease to exist on the North Shore beyond that date, unless significant increases in curling fees (far beyond the financial capabilities of the curlers) are received. The NSWC recognizes the importance of curling on the North Shore and has indicated that it is willing to continue to accommodate public curling, provided that the financial short falls can somehow be financed from other sources.

Attached is a Position Paper (Attachment 2) which describes the prevailing conditions for not only the NSWC but for all of the other public curling clubs in the Lower Mainland. As noted in Table 4 of the document, the NSWC subsidy for the forthcoming season 2009-2010 is expected to be in the range of \$130,000. This figure, however, still remains to be further evaluated and verified.

Importance of Curling on the North Shore

There are currently 565 active curlers at the NSWC. This level of participation compares very favourably with all of the other clubs. Ages of curlers range from teenagers to over 90 years of age. Many curlers are in their 70's and 80's. These curlers rely on the sport for not only social interaction, which is important for mental health, but for maintaining physical health through exercise. It is also important to recognize that the interest in curling has increased in recent years after being accepted as an Olympic Sport. If curling were to be terminated at the NSWC, the sport would no longer be an option for most of the participants at this location, since ice time would not be available at the other clubs and travel times would be prohibitive. Maintaining access to public curling on the North Shore is therefore considered to be critically important and that is where the North Shore municipalities and possibly School Districts come into play. Without community support, public curling will not be available on the North Shore after April, 2010.

Recommendation to the North Shore Municipalities

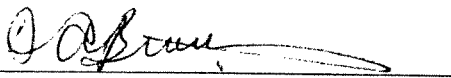
In order for public curling to continue at the NSWC, after April, 2010, we are appealing to all three North Shore municipalities to contribute financially to the cause under a long term arrangement with the NSWC (Minimum 5-year term to begin with and preferably a 10-year term on a core-funding basis). During the first year of the agreement a total contribution of about \$144,000 is required, with this amount to be adjusted annually in the future to compensate for inflation.

It is our recommendation that cost sharing of the above amount be in direct proportion to the curling participation from each municipality. This would result in the District of North Vancouver assuming about 56.2% of the costs or \$81,000; City of North Vancouver, 30.6% or \$44,000 and the District of West Vancouver, 13.2% or \$19,000. These proportions have remained relatively constant over the years, but could be adjusted from time to time if the participation rates begin to change. In the event that the North Shore School Districts also agree to participate, the above contributions from the municipalities would be reduced.

It is important to realize that public funding is provided at all of the other public curling rinks (see Table 2 of the attached Position Paper) within the Lower Mainland to ensure curling is available at a reasonable price for participants. Our financial request is therefore consistent with what is happening elsewhere; the only difference being that public curling on the North Shore is provided at a privately-owned facility. We are certain that it can be easily demonstrated that it is far more cost effective to provide financial assistance to permit curling to continue at the NSWC than to ask taxpayers to fund the cost to construct and operate a brand new public facility.

In conclusion, we the curlers on the North Shore respectfully request that you seriously consider our proposal. If necessary, we would also welcome the opportunity to appear before Council as a delegation to present our request and answer any question that you may have. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to call me at 604-983-3436 should you require any additional information.

Yours very truly,



Mr. Don Brundrett
on behalf of public curling on the North Shore,
comprising leagues listed in Attachment 1.

Additional Letters Sent to;

Mayor and Members of Council,
Corporation of the City of North Vancouver

Mayor and Members of Council,
District of North Vancouver

Attachments: 1. Public Curling at the North Shore Winter Club
2. Position Paper on Behalf of Public Curling on the North Shore

Attachment 1: Public Curling at the North Shore Winter Club

Organized Leagues

<u>League:</u>	<u>Chairperson:</u>
Monday Men's League	Mike Howey
Monday Ladies League	Joan Henderson
Tuesday Ladies League	Audrey Campbell
Tuesday Mixed/Open League	Grant Ritchie
Tuesday & Thursday Nor'westers	Dave Daveu
Wednesday Business Ladies	Shirley Mitchell
Wednesday Junior League (Two sessions)	Michelle Hunt, Head Coach
Thursday Ladies League	Jeanne Douglas
Thursday Open League	Jay Peachey
Friday Mixed/Open League	Chris Milne
Friday Senior Men's League	Don Brundrett
Saturday Professional Engineer's League (51 st consecutive season)	Keith Fenton

Other Events

Getting Started Program – qualified instruction for elementary school children Grades 5 to 7 on Wednesdays and Friday mornings, to learn the game of curling. 2008/09 Season over 700 participants.

Hosted Masters Provincial Championship 2009 providing a venue for 16 teams representative of all the regions of the Province.

Hosted BC High School Provincial Championships 2008 with 8 regions of the Province (64 participants) represented.

Annually provide the venue for regional BC High School playdowns.

December 2009: providing the venue for the Junior Coastal Playdowns with up to 64 participants.

Annual Masters Men's Bonspiel with 64 participants

Annual Professional Engineers Bonspiel (43rd consecutive) minimum of 64 participants

Annual Heart & Stroke Bonspiel (charity fund-raiser)

Annual Skins Bonspiel

Open Curling provided for non-registered curlers to practice on Monday and Saturday afternoons.

Attachment 2: POSITION PAPER ON BEHALF OF PUBLIC CURLING ON THE NORTH SHORE

Background:

- In June of 1999, a ten-year agreement was signed to amalgamate curling on the North Shore at the North Shore Winter Club (NSWC).
- There are currently over 550 adults participating regularly in curling at the NSWC, and over 700 children participating in our Junior/Juvenile League and our Getting Started programs.
- Participation has shifted noticeably during those ten years from the original 50/50 split to a point where public curlers now represent over 90% of the total adult curlers registered in league play at the NSWC and fewer than 10% are members of the NSWC.
- The 1999 agreement expired June 30, 2009, and the number of "member curlers" is insufficient for the NSWC to continue funding what is in reality a public -curling facility.
- A new funding formula is urgently required to allow this significant sporting activity to continue for the hundreds of interested curling enthusiasts residing on the North Shore.

The Sport:

- Curling is a sporting activity that is enjoyed by individuals of all ages and athletic ability. It plays an important role in fulfilling the active lifestyle aspirations of an aging population as it provides a social environment for our seniors as well as physical activity.
- Our children's' programs provide an active introduction to the game and teach them the etiquette of curling and the rules. The program is growing each year with the schools, especially with the advent of the 30 minute activity rule now in place.
- Curling is substantially more than a minor fringe sport and interest in it has grown noticeably since it has become an official Olympic competitive sport.
- Development of competitive curling talent at the national level relies on availability of a network of local curling facilities and the modern 8 sheet curling facility at NSWC is a vital part of that program. By hosting major Provincial Events, it attracts participants (minimum 64 per event) and viewers to the North Shore for up to 10 days.
- Curling bonspiels (short duration group competitions) are a positive revenue generator for the communities that host them when participants can be drawn from outside the local community.

Lower Mainland Curling Environment:

- Curling at the NSWC is part of a network that includes six other public curling rinks on the Lower Mainland. The NSWC is the only publicly-accessible club in the network that is privately funded.

Table 1. Metro Vancouver curling facilities and their fee structures:

Facility	Join fees and other fees	League fees
Coquitlam Curling Club	\$25 per year	Range: \$125 to \$250
Marpole Curling Club	\$150 lifetime initiation fee for Men's leagues and voting members	Average \$225 Juniors: \$75 for 15 weeks
Port Moody	\$25 per annum	Not Available Juniors \$60
Vancouver Curling Club	\$25 per annum	Range: \$185 to \$265 Juniors: \$150
Royal City Curling Club	\$315 renewal each 5 years for Prime Time Curlers	Range: \$160 to \$400 Juniors: \$75
Richmond Curling Club	Options: \$500 family lifetime \$50 annual fee \$300 single lifetime	\$240 Juniors \$80

- The NSWC has been restricted by the terms of the agreement with the North Vancouver Recreation Commission to charge rate to curlers that are no higher than the median of these "benchmark club" rates (currently \$185 to \$285 for adults and \$90 for juniors) and no other fees were permitted.

- All of the other public curling facilities within the Lower Mainland are provided some type of substantial municipal support:

Table 2 Municipal involvement in Lower mainland curling facilities

Club	Sheets of Ice	Participants 2008/09	Municipal involvement
Marpole	6	664	Owens land and building
Port Moody	6	268	Owens land and building
Richmond	8	762	Owens land
Royal City	6	672	Owens land and building
Vancouver	5	824	Owens land and building
North Shore Winter Club	8	565	Private club

- The North Shore situation is unique as it is the only jurisdiction where public curling is provided by a private members' club.

Basis of New Funding Request:

- None of the other six facilities are reasonably accessible to North Shore residents by public transport and would require a lengthy car commute. Many curlers, especially our seniors, would not be likely to be able to commute to the other clubs located on the Lower Mainland.
- Public curling on the North Shore requires financial support from local taxpayers similar to that provided for other sports on the North Shore and by other municipalities.
- Fees for the public curlers need to be maintained at levels similar to those at other public curling facilities to retain healthy participation levels on the North Shore.
- Without municipal funding support most North Shore curlers will not be able to continue in the sport beyond 2010 due to commuting and distances to other clubs as well as availability of ice at those facilities. The Vancouver Club, for example, will be closed from November 2009 until it takes possession of the new facility likely to be in the fall of 2011 which will further disrupt curling accessibility on the Lower Mainland.

Table 3: Demographics of curling participants at the NSWC

Municipality	# of Participants	% representation
District of North Vancouver	295	52%
City of North Vancouver	157	28%
District of West Vancouver	68	12%
Other: Vancouver, Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminister	45	8%
TOTAL	565	100%

- In addition to the 565 direct participants, there is additional usage of the curling facility for private rentals, adult "learn to curl" lessons, and the school programs.
- Roughly 14% of current NSWC curlers are under 19, some 64% are between age 20 and 54, and the remaining 23% are between age 55 and 91.
- Over 90% of these individuals reside on the North Shore.

The Costs of Continued NSWC Curling Operation:

- Annual dues from league curlers and rink rental fees to other leagues and private groups have to date generally covered the day-to-day curling rink operational costs.
- Annual monetary contribution from the North Vancouver Recreation Commission was \$10,000 in 2004 and \$5,000 per annum in subsequent years.
- The District of North Vancouver, since 2005, has provided an annual property tax reduction of \$17,000 as the NSWC provides public access not only for its curling program but many of its skating, hockey and tennis programs.
- The curling facilities represent 10% of the club's total physical facilities. It is reasonable to conclude that the curling program, therefore, should contribute 10% to the operating overhead of the NSWC (based on 2009 costs of \$3,000,000).
- Allowances for life cycle renewal costs to the structure, refrigeration plant and other equipment are a necessary part of any building and should be part of any rational

budgeting process, but there has been insufficient cash available from the curling program to ensure this capital fund reserve. This too needs to be rectified.

Table 4: Distribution of annual curling operating costs

	Existing Distribution (Year Ended Apr 30, 2009)		Required Distribution to break even	
	Dollars	Percentage	Dollars	Percentage
Public curlers fees	\$146,000	48.6%	\$153,000	51.0%
NSWC member curlers through activity fee (membership dues not included)	\$4,000	1.3%	\$3,000	1.0%
NSWC (by default) subsidy to Public Curling	\$128,000	42.7%	\$0	0%
Municipalities (through NVRC)	\$5,000	1.7%	\$0	0%
District of North Vancouver (Property Tax reduction)	\$17,000	5.7%	\$0	0%
District of North Vancouver (annual operating grant)	\$0	0%	\$81,000	27.0%
City of North Vancouver (annual operating grant)	\$0	0%	\$44,000	14.7%
District of West Vancouver (annual operating grant)	\$0	0%	\$19,000	6.3%
	\$300,000	100%	\$300,000	100%

Summary & Recommendations:

- Curling is a sport an individual can participate from childhood to master seniors (over 80's). It is a valued activity by a significant group of North Shore citizens who participate and are prepared to pay competitively-based dues.
- Without new funding the NSWC will cease to have curling facilities available to anyone after the 2009/10 season ends.
- The NSWC Management is open minded about keeping curling in place provided they can make a modest return and ensure funds for capital replacement (provided it does not continue to be a disproportionate burden on the general membership of the private club).
- The curling facility at the NSWC was built in 1991. In anticipation of having to replace equipment and restoration, a capital reserve fund must be addressed and a method of building that fund determined. An annual fee to curlers (in addition to league fees) will be charged, fund raising and grant applications are another avenue for capital replacement as well as one-time grants from the Municipalities.
- We have a relatively new facility already in place at the NSWC to accommodate those curlers. Replacing the NSWC curling facilities elsewhere in the community would cost the taxpayers many millions of dollars which is unnecessary. It is likely that this route would be politically unpopular as well due to the high costs.

The NSWC requires \$150,000 per year (based on current 2008-2009 operating costs) of additional financial support from increased dues, join fees, and the three North Shore Municipalities support in order to ensure continued public access for curling