



CUPE Local 500 Speaking Notes

Standing Committee on Property and Development

February 14, 2012

We appreciate the opportunity to present our views regarding this important motion before you today.

CUPE Local 500 represents employees involved in the maintenance and other services at Winnipeg's Municipal Golf Courses.

As a union, we have been an important part of the community for over 50 years and want to play a role in assuring public services remain available for the citizens of Winnipeg today, and into the future.

We are here today in support of this motion and wish to focus our presentation on two key areas:

Firstly, the motion speaks to the value of public spaces and that they are essential to the urban fabric, encouraging and promoting healthy lifestyles and cleaner environments:

- The Municipal Golf Courses have served the citizens of Winnipeg for close to 100 years. They have a long and proud history of providing accessible and affordable golf in our city.
- Many families, seniors, young people and leagues have enjoyed our municipal golf courses for decades. Bob Hope played his very first golf game at Kildonan Golf Course.

- They have been a special part of Winnipeg's landscape for many decades and are essential to the quality of life we enjoy in our city.

Secondly, the motion talks about how the City has been in consultations with developers and golf course operators regarding future options for the golf courses and green space. The City has not provided the same opportunity to the public.

- We believe it is in the best interest of the City to provide a citizen engagement and consultation process with key stakeholders prior to any decisions being made with respect to the sale or development of City-owned golf courses. There is a great deal of expertise, knowledge and creativity among Winnipeg residents. We see no reason why these discussions cannot take place.
- Although transfers to general revenues stopped in 2009, there was \$1.7 million dollars transferred from 2003 – 2009. One might say this was profit generated. Perhaps, if these revenues were re-invested back into the golf courses, they may not be in the condition they are in today.
- The business arrangement as it now stands for semi-private courses should be revisited in the best interest of the citizens of Winnipeg. We believe the one-dollar lease per year fee for the semi-private courses can no longer be offered.

- The operational review report (page 12) indicates that contract management could save the City \$14.5 million within the first 5 years. However, it also indicates that this is speculative, provided that a vendor would be willing to invest \$1 million per course. We suspect this would only be the case if it generated corresponding revenues.
- Over the past several years, Local 500 has advocated and recommended that the City formulate a business plan to examine its golf course operations. We believe that through a capital improvement and marketing plan, the municipal golf courses have the potential to remain strong community assets. CUPE Local 500 wants to work with City officials and remains prepared to play a fundamental role in the future of our golf courses.

In closing, we thank you for the opportunity to appear at this Standing Committee meeting.

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