

This is a request to appear before City Council on December 9th & 10th, 2019. I will be discussing the redevelopment of the Regent Par III Golf Course. My name is: BOBBY STADNYK

My address is: [REDACTED] My phone number is [REDACTED]

The following is a written summary of what I will be presenting:

My name is Bobbi Stadnyk I am here tonight on behalf of the CPCG to oppose funding for a recreation hub on the urban forest land located at the Regent Par III Golf Course. It is important that none of the trees on the land be destroyed.

On October 19th Chris Sale, Senior Planner for the City of Regina sent an email to me as the contact for the CPCG providing reasons why the City had to remove trees from the golf course land to put in a recreation hub. His email was a response to an email our group sent him outlining in great detail over a dozen reasons why dozens if not hundreds of trees in the urban forest should not be destroyed by the City in favor of the hub and identifying other more appropriate locations in Coronation. Sale's reasons for the necessity of the destruction were weak at best and sometimes frankly misleading.

Here are some of Sale's arguments for why the trees should be destroyed with reasons regarding why he is wrong.

Sale says Coronation Park and North Central are underserved in the provision of this type of amenity according to the Recreation Master Plan (2019)

We say if the hub is needed it can be moved to the ACT or Pony Park Ball Diamond locations which are still in Coronation. Sale claims neither location can be used for reasons we find unacceptable and will be discussed in a minute. The City's Master Recreation Plan states it's necessary to cut the number of ball diamonds in the City in half leaving 1 diamond per 2,500 citizens instead of the current 1 per 1,250 citizens. Coronation already has 16 diamonds or 1 per 440 people which is nearly 6 times the number the city recommends. This idea of an overabundance of ball diamonds in a neighbourhood is consistent with what is done in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Regina. For example, North Central has 1 diamond per 737 people, and North east 1 per 318 people. In these areas child poverty is 65% (golf course area), 63% (East Side of North Central) and 26% respectively. Wealthy areas tend to not have unsightly ball diamonds. For example, Prairie view has 1 per 2,056 people, Walsh Acres / Englewood 1 per 2,666 and Harbor Landing has no diamonds. Disadvantaged children do not play ball at anywhere near the rate wealthy children do. Bringing children in to disadvantaged neighbourhoods from wealthier neighbourhoods to play ball for 2 months of the year and then leaving the unsightly unusable space for the other 10 months is an example of wealthy privilege at the expense of the poor.

When it comes to sports fields the picture is worse. Page 35 of Regina's Recreation Facility Plan says that athletic fields are targeted at youth. It also said that use of sports fields in the City was in decline.

Then in Regina's Recreation Master Plan on page 66 it says that only 25% of youths surveyed supported the idea of more sports fields in Regina.

Also on page 66 it says the City's target is to have 1 field per 3,600 residents. Coronation already has 6 fields or 1 per 1,240 people, three times the number recommended by the plan. North Central has 1 per 1,961 people nearly double the recommended number. Wealthy areas have far fewer fields Twin Lakes has 1 field per 3,518 people and Prairie View 1 per 2,056 people. As with diamonds, fields are low costs solutions for poor neighbourhoods and seemingly are considered more appropriate for disadvantaged families whereas wealthy neighbourhoods have higher end amenities like man made lakes and streams with huge fountains and fabulous walking trails and as it says online a gorgeous naturalized landscape to provide a scenic view for people and habitat for birds and animals.

So what is Sale talking about in terms of underserved amenities in the area? Could he mean the seasonal bathrooms and a toboggan hill? No one in a rational state of mind would think it was a great idea to remove an urban forest in favor of those. It defies logic. In fact, it isn't a good idea to remove an urban forest for nearly any reason.

Sale went on to veto the idea of using the ACT or Pony Park diamonds as the location for the hub citing reasons that primarily revolved around the diamonds being heavily used, the need for numerous diamonds in one location for tournament use and because it would take more public consultation to do this.

In terms of tournament use, we spoke to a Baseball Regina rep who told us that until the last few years the ACT Ball Diamonds that sit 50 feet from the golf course were rarely if ever used. He did not feel these diamonds were necessary to the world of baseball in Regina. He also said that it is not necessary to have 4 or 5 ball diamonds in one location for tournament purposes and that in fact it is the norm and is expected by teams. Parents of children who play ball at the ACT location have informed us that only 2 or 3 of the 5 diamonds are ever used at 1 time during tournaments.

Needing the 5 ACT ball diamonds in one place for tournaments is therefore not a valid reason to destroy hundreds of trees. If Coronation needed more multiple ball diamond locations for tournaments, and it doesn't, they could be more appropriately placed at McMurchy Park, Lorimer Park and Merlin Parks 2 and 3.

Sale went on to say the Regina Recreation Facility Plan recommends the conversion of the golf course into a neighbourhood recreation hub, removing the sports field from the hub would significantly weaken the intended outcome of the project

We already established that there are more than enough sports fields in Coronation and North Central so that point is moot. The field is not needed.

Both the Recreation Facility Plan and the Recreation Master plan recognize there may be a need to reconsider ideas in the future depending on circumstances. The Recreation Facility Plan that Sale referred to was written 10 years ago. Climate change was not on center stage the way it is now. The importance of urban forests had nowhere near the presence it now has on the world stage as a major

priority. It is certainly a more appropriate time to stop the destruction of hundreds of trees anywhere in the city. Again, to decimate an urban forest in favor of a recreation hub is patently wrong.

Sale also cited a loss of synergy for the users of the sports field including access to proposed washrooms, pathways, playgrounds, spray pad etc.

We say the ACT land and the golf course are about 50 feet apart and could easily be joined by a very small bridge across the channel. 50 feet is a reasonable space to get from a playground to a washroom. There would be no loss of synergy and in fact the bridge would add a great deal more aesthetic appeal to the recreation hub.

Sale claimed the sports field will bring many formal and informal uses and users to the park increasing activity, the opportunity for neighbourly interactions and safety.

We say people who use a sports field do so for a specific event and then they are gone and the field remains unused until the next event. People don't meet to chat in the middle of a sports field or stroll around back and forth over it.

A sports field could never provide nearly the opportunity for neighbourly interactions or increased activity that a well-maintained urban forest with park benches, walking paths, picnic areas, a fountain or two a disk golf option, and a playground would generate. Not even close. To think there could be any comparison is ludicrous. If the City chooses a field over urban forest space they are actually users and uses.

In terms of Sale mentioning safety.

We say in 2018 numerous studies on green space concluded that areas abundant in tree cover have reduced crime rates when compared to similar areas with less tree cover. The larger and taller trees were associated with not only reduced crime rates; but also the occurrence of less violent crimes. The authors explained that larger trees may also encourage people to spend more time outside and, with more individuals outside in a community, the probability of a criminal being observed increases thereby discouraging criminal activity.

Tree Canada, a Canadian registered charity found that urban forests promote social interaction and a sense of community, including stronger ties to neighbours, a greater sense of safety, and more use of outdoor public spaces.

Sale says in order to turn the ball diamonds into a sports hub more public consultation would be needed.

We ask would that be the end of the world? Shouldn't the City want to find out what the citizens want. In the consultation processes the City refused to take a vote by show of hands which would have made it clear what the community wanted. Instead they split people into groups and said we are not working to consensus. No one wanted consensus we wanted a majority rules situation just as you would expect in a democracy. City representatives seem to see public consultation as the kiss of death. Given how the consultation process on the golf course went I can see why Sale doesn't want to involve the community with any choices the city makes.

According to Statistics Canada the following applies to North Central and Coronation Park: the ball diamond area of Coronation has a 65% child poverty rate. The population is 36.4% Aboriginal, and 30.35% visible minorities. The West side of North Central has a child poverty rate of 48.7%. The population is 27.6% Aboriginal and 16.8% visible minorities. The East side of North Central has a child poverty rate of 62.8%. The population is nearly 45% Aboriginal and 15% visible minorities.

Recently, two documents outlining objections to all of the City's proposals for the Regent Par III Golf Course, including the all green space option, were the focus of a door to door survey of people living in North Central or Coronation Park. Out of over 1,600 people approached to sign the documents, only 10 chose not to. This means that well over 99% agreed with the content of the documents. The majority of people who signed the documents were Aboriginal. This high level of agreement on any topic is rare in the world of surveys. It also means that statistically you have enough signatures that you can say you are 99% sure that 99% of the entire population of North Central and Coronation agree with what you are saying.

The document stated the following: 1) it rejected all of the City's proposals for the land including the green space proposal 2) none of the trees on the golf course land should be destroyed 3) the trees and the land are protecting the area from flooding 4) Destruction of any of the trees would displace or cause death to many species that make the land their home 5) the golf course land should have more trees not less

You should not be allocating 3 million dollars to a project that destroys a significant part of an urban forest and that Aboriginal people, visible minorities, tax payers and disadvantaged people living in the golf course area have very clearly told you they don't want.

The community in the golf course area has long felt City Council is not listening to them. The present situation with the recreation hub has increased that perception.

