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Regional District of Nanaimo
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Board Chairs and Superintendent
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Via Email:

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Via Email:

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Superintendent@sd68.bc.ca

Dear RDN Board Members, School Trustees and Superintendent,

Re: Potential Conflict of Interest - Basketball Court was never presented to the School Board for Joint Land Use Agreement

I am writing to you to express my concerns regarding a pickleball court that is being proposed at Cedar Secondary School (CSS) through a Joint Land Use Agreement with the School Board.

Cedar community members found out about the proposed pickleball court via a Facebook post made 2 days ago. An RDN Area A Parks Committee Member ("SN") commented on it making it very apparent that she is an avid pickleball player. She has made multiple comments on the Cedar page pushing the pickleball court. Because of my concerns with the proposal, I attended the Parks Committee Meeting on June 18th and appeared as Delegate. I spoke to fact that the community was not consulted about a pickleball court, that pickleball courts are noisy and in many communities have been shut down due to that fact. I inquired as to whether an outdoor basketball court similar to Snuneymuxw's (SFN) outdoor court located at Needham and Centre Street had been proposed to the School Board and was told it had not been. I was also informed that Mr. Pascoe who is now retired agreed to the pickleball proposal. I firmly believe that if Mr. Pascoe was offered a choice between a pickleball court or a basketball court, that he would have chosen the latter. Mr. Pascoe

was not only in attendance CSS's home basketball games he also travelled to other schools to watch them play. He is dearly missed!

The Community of Cedar does not have an athletic park or field, an arena or even a library. The proposed plan that includes the pickleball court falls short of our youth's need and only benefits a few adults in the community who are able to drive to pickleball courts that already exist. Our youth are not able to drive to SFN's outdoor basketball court or to their Recreational Centre where they also play basketball. Parents have to drive them back and forth. The bus that services Cedar runs every 50 minutes, requires transfers and walking which is not ideal for teenagers especially at dusk.

The day before the meeting was held I spoke with Theresa Kraeker, the Principal of CSS who informed me that there are students at CSS who have been negatively impacted by pickleball because it replaced a popular bike facility. She stated that kids were already not happy about pickleball because of that. She agreed that the SFN's outdoor basketball court is a well designed and great space for youth to play basketball and understood the need for a similar court at the school and stated she would bring it up with the School Board. When kids found out through social media that a pickleball court was set to go in that location they stated it would be vandalized. Obviously I do not agree with those comments and am only bringing them up because it confirms what the principal stated. (See attached). We need to ensure that we have facilities on the school land that the youth are going to use.

After the meeting I emailed the Phys Ed teacher at the school and asked for his opinion on a both a basketball court and pickleball court and this was his response:

I would choose basketball for sure. Students do not play pickleball on their own unless we get them to in PE. As for basketball grade 8 has a boys and girls tea. Therefore could potentially be 6-7 basketball teams in a year. Some years we have a grade 9 and a grade 9/10 team. (Email attached).

As I stated above Cedar does not have sports facilities. A basketball court will not only benefit CSS students, it will also benefit older kids at Cedar Elementary and Quam Quam students.

At the Parks Committee meeting we also learned that pickleball was chosen because the Area A Director received "a lot" of letters requesting an outdoor court and that it was the most popular sport played in the RDN (over dodge ball!). Did SN have an impact on how many letters were sent in? I am attaching screenshots from her Facebook profile and urge members to also review it. I believe there is a potential conflict of interest and request that the Area A Director to remove her from any further decisions regarding pickleball and the Joint Land Use Agreement. As someone who is actively advocating with the Save Cable Bay group I do understand and appreciate her passion! However, I purposely did not join the RDN Parks Committee, have not applied for employment with the RDN or the City and I would expect the same of a volunteer committee member that is making very important decisions for our community that impact the community for many years.

It is really unfortunate that this was not brought forth to community via the community facebook page as other meetings and information was posted and there was strong engagement on many of the Area A Director's posts.

At the meeting one of the Committee members asked if the basketball court should be regulation size and would tournaments be held at it? I have no idea if that feasible but if it is it would not only be beneficial to the youth but it would be an economic benefit to both Cedar and Nanaimo. A bike track and children's playground will be wonderful additions on the school lands. Why not add a bike jump to the track? A golf putting range? Let's ask the kids what they want to see in that area and come up with a proposal that benefits them for years to come

Please do allow the proposal to go forward to the public to comment on as it is.

Thank you,

Jackie Wasyluk

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cc: Theresa.Kraeker@sd.68.bc.ca

Enclosure: PDF document (SN Posts, Kids social media comments, Email from PE Teacher, Pictures of SFN Outdoor BB Court)