

Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services

DV 298 (Belconnen Golf Course)

On behalf of many of my fellow golfers, I wish to make the following submission on the above application. Our starting point is that we do not oppose the application, at least in principle. Rather we seek a workable compromise to address key concerns which we regard as being in need of resolution by the committee.

Background

We have already made two submissions on this matter (see attached): the first was signed by more than 50 golf club members, while the second was in response to ACTPLA's report on the public consultation process. These submissions raised a number of issues which the committee may wish to address, and request that they be treated as in integral part of this submission. However, this submission does not seek to replicate that material in detail.

Golf Club House

Our assessment of reasons given for relocating the existing golf club house by Magpies (and supported by the developer) is that they are unconvincing. Propositions that the committee may feel are relevant to this issue include that:

- Magpies does not seek to promote the currently situated golf club in competition to its main club now — so why would it want to actively undermine the main club's viability by locating a replacement club even closer?
- The land occupied by the existing golf club house (and its associate extensive car parks) is potentially worth more in terms of land value than the rest of the proposed residential development — notwithstanding the current proposal to locate a community facility on the site. And interestingly, the application is to rezone this land as residential — rather than retain it as community use.

On this subject, we urge the committee to make the following finding and recommendation.

Finding: The committee is not convinced of the need to move the existing golf club house from its present site.

Recommendation: That the existing golf club house remain in its present location and be incorporated with the community facility proposed by the developer for this site. Further, that the proposed site for the community facility (now incorporating the existing golf club house) NOT be rezoned residential.

Golf Course

Although it should be addressed (see attached submissions), alterations to the golf course flowing from this rezoning application are a cause for considerable concern to users of the course — including large numbers of non-members since Belconnen is a public golf course. It takes a long time for a course to mature, and this one has already been significantly disturbed by the insertion of two housing developments. History suggests that membership drops, and financial viability is threatened, when significant changes have to be made to the layout of a golf course. And, significantly, this will not have to happen to any significant extent if the committee adopts the finding and recommendation suggested below.

Finding: The remaining 18-hole golf course's boundaries need to be delineated as part of the rezoning application and a commitment made on the part of the government that the remaining (full-length) 18-hole course will remain free from any possible further curtailment.

Recommendation: That the boundary of the remaining 18-hole golf course be delineated as part of the development application and that the proposed residential development NOT encroach on the course — in particular that the existing 2nd hole be preserved as is as an integral part of the course. Further, the committee recommends that the government guarantee that the remaining (full-length) 18-hole course will not be further compromised in any way.

Access to Water

The golf course buys and depends on recycled water currently pumped into its primary water storage via a pipeline which passes through the proposed residential development. The proposed 'undergrounding' of the high-voltage transmission lines is planned to pass through a corner of this primary water storage, raising not only the issue of what alternative arrangement might be necessary in terms of a replacement to meet the demands of the golf course (particularly in times of drought), but also likely joint use of such water as is available with the proposed residential development.

On this subject, we urge the committee to make the following finding and recommendation.

Finding: The remaining 18-hole golf course and the proposed residential development will need to share water — in particular recycled water currently pumped across the proposed residential development from the nearby treatment works for use by the golf course.

Recommendation: That the developer come to an arrangement with the lessee of the remaining 18-hole golf course for joint water management and use — with the mutually agreed arrangement to be enforceable at law.

Public Safety

The attached submissions raise the issue of public safety, particularly in the context

of access to public transport on the part of residents of the new estate. Public safety is already an issue with the current on-course residential developments, with at least one serious injury (loss of an eye) caused by a golf ball.

On this subject, we urge the committee to make the following finding and recommendation.

Finding: The public already accesses public transport in a dangerous way by crossing fairways instead of using the walkway provided (linking Britten-Jones Drive with Spofforth Street) and that this practice has the potential to become of even more concern once the proposed residential development proceeds.

Recommendation: That risk to life and limb on the part of the general public be minimised by physically preventing public access to the remaining 18-hole golf course from the proposed residential development and that suitable screening and 'clearways' be incorporated into the design of the proposed new development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Hagan'. The signature is stylized with a large, circular initial 'P' and a cursive 'Hagan'.

Philip Hagan
9 Oct. 10 2010