

Editorial in the August Issue, The Hampton Journal
Province Picks Wrong Land
To Settle Band Claims

Would the provincial government consider offering the Musqueam First Nation a piece of land other than University Golf Course as a way of “accommodating” band land claims.

On the face of it, this might seem like an unlikely swap. If you were handed 120 acres of pristine grassland (the golf course), would you not want to hang onto it? But a trap lies herein for the Musqueam band, and we don’t mean one of the many sand traps in the 18-hole course that lies either side of University Boulevard west from Blanca Street. We mean the trap of negotiating hard for something which, when you get it, you can’t do much with.

Both Premier Gordon Campbell and band chief Ernest Campbell have said that even if ceded to the Musqueam, University Golf Course will remain in use as a golf course for the next 25 years.

This will come as small consolation to members of the Musqueam band who say they want land they can do something with today—in other words, land they can turn into cash today. We doubt many members of the band want to be land-rich and cash-poor for the next 25 years, and earning \$480,000 a year from the golf course lease, while nice, will not satisfy a lot of band members.

A member of the band council has argued Musqueam need the golf course so that 25 years from now, when Musqueam population has grown to 3,000 from 1,200 today, members of the band will have enough room to live. But this argument hardly holds when you consider that separately from the University Golf Course deal being negotiated by the government and the Musqueam, the band has also successfully negotiated take over of the 120-acre Shaughnessy Golf Course 25 years from now to use as it wishes.

Surely, this other golf course would provide the band with enough land to accommodate a growing population.

All this talk of ‘25 years hence’ appears to some members of the band as so much ‘futurism’ when what they want is land they can do something with today, and so, we recommend the government consider negotiating with the Greater Vancouver Regional District to get about 200 acres of the 2,000-acre Pacific Spirit Regional Park returned so that it can provide the Musqueam with land they can turn into cash today—maybe the 200 acres most adjacent to Shaughnessy Golf Course.

Minimal development controls would cover this land, meaning the Musqueam could develop it fairly easily, and start generating serious cash for the band in the short-term future.