

Golf course backed

Poll says most want land removed from park

Christina Montgomery

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A citizens' group aiming to yank the University of B.C. golf course out of a land deal with the Musqueam First Nation says its online poll shows that 72 per cent of Metro Vancouver residents favour carving equivalent land out of Pacific Spirit Park instead.

Vancouver parks board commissioner Marty Zlotnick -- one of the group's founders, who insists he is acting as a private citizen on the issue -- said Friday he wants the provincial government to listen to the 3,000 citizens who want the course preserved.

The Metro Vancouver residents were polled by Angus Reid in an exercise Zlotnick's group commissioned. Pacific Spirit Park is run by the Metro Vancouver Regional District, formerly the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Zlotnick's involvement so angered COPE park board members Loretta Woodcock and Spencer Herbert that they called a press conference this month to denounce his action.

In 2005, the B.C. Court of Appeal ordered the province to come to an agreement with the Musqueam First Nation regarding the land the course sits on. This summer, the Musqueam and the province announced the land would be transferred to the band but be operated as a course until at least 2033. The province had sold the land to UBC for \$11 million in 2003 with a covenant that it would be used for "an 18-hole public golf course."

Zlotnick, a UBC graduate who has used the course to host charity events, said Friday he launched the campaign to eat into the 730-hectare park near the university because he thought the public would support the move.

He said Friday the results have been presented to Mike de Jong, provincial minister of aboriginal relations, and that further talks were planned.

The poll showed support for the swap was greater among residents who lived farthest from Pacific Spirit Park. In the City of Vancouver, only 62 per cent of residents favoured it.

cmontgomery@png.canwest.com

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