

City Taxes - a statement from Lindsay Thachuk

We all pay taxes for a variety of City service's such as snow removal, sanitary sewer services, water services, recreational and cultural services to name a few. The City creates a budget each year that looks at upcoming expenses and various revenue streams. The proportion of each property's taxes is based on the assessment applied to that property. The City cannot charge any one property or group of properties more than the calculated amount.

The argument has been made that the proposed residential development on the land now occupied by the Royal Golf Course will in some way compensate for the extraordinary amount of money the City will have to pay to provide the essential services to the development. The taxes paid from those home owners will only pay for their actual yearly services just like every other property in the City.

There are numerous studies and reports on the Internet of the consequences on the property values around a golf course and in all cases those properties that paid a premium to live on or near the golf course will find the assessed value of the property will go down by up to 20%. These are not speculative numbers but real numbers aligned with towns and cities that have seen golf courses close down.

To that end, we would see a depreciation of property values on those houses around and near the Royal York golf course. As the City of Armstrong is very small and the presense of the golf course in the city really affects the value of properties throughout the city, one can see how a very large numbers of properties will lose their appeal and corresponding value if the golf course was to close. This reduces current overall tax revenue to the City.

The only answer to this is increased taxes throughout the City despite Todd York's claim that taxes would not go up. On what basis does he make such a profound statement? There will be no extra pot of gold coming out of the development.

Going back to the development, the developer is only responsible for the services to be built on the actual property. Any other improvements to the water and sewer system to provide an adequate level of service for this large a development is borne by the taxpayers throughtout the city.

In other municipalities, there are DCC (Development Cost Charges) as defined by the BC government:

Municipalities and regional districts levy development cost charges on new development to pay for new or expanded

infrastructure such as sewer, water, drainage, parks and roads necessary to adequately service the demands of that new development.

In Armstrong, they have a Voluntary Capital Cost (VCC) Policy instead of DDC's. The amount paid was increased and approved at the December 10th, 2018 Council meeting. However, in the past the City has repeatedly accepted 'parkland' in lieu of monies from the developer and in some cases, the land was deemed inappropriate for the developer to use and in fact was very high maintenance useless parts of the property. Of course, by donating the land, the developer also downloaded all maintenance and responsibility for the 'parkland' to the taxpayers of Armstrong. End result was no money for infrastructure upgrades so that was covered by every taxpayer in Armstrong.