

Original letter to Kal Tire with responses below

Attention Robert Foord
President, Kal Tire

While I was packing up my golf clubs after one of my regular games at the Royal York Golf Course, I noticed two young men just finishing up on the practice putting green. I went over to them to ask about their obvious enjoyment of the Golf Course. It turns out they are about to enter Grade 9 at Pleasant Valley High School and they have been playing golf at Royal York since they were introduced to the game after a sport excursion from Len Wood Middle School a couple of years ago. I introduced myself and my position as President of the Armstrong Green Space Society and explained our objective to support the current zoning of the golf course lands as Recreation/Commercial in the City of Armstrong Official Community Plan. You should have seen their eyes light up when they realized that our group was seeking to keep the golf course in Armstrong.

There are many rumours going around about your company and its intentions and these unsubstantiated statements are an ongoing concern for many members of the community. It would be great if Kal Tire put out clear objectives of its future plans in our little town.

Our Society has over 50 members from throughout the North Okanagan who are very concerned about the plans by your subsidiary company, N & T Properties, to possibly buy and redevelop the golf course land into a large housing development.

Our concerns and investigations are all posted on our website www.armgss.com. In brief our concerns centre on the loss of a major recreational opportunity for the 41% of the Armstrong taxpayers who are Seniors.

There is also the recognized impact the stormwater system of your development will have on the floodplain of Meighan Creek which runs throughout the City below the golf course. Ground water now going on to the golf course land will now be immediately directed into the troublesome creek from the stormwater drains of your proposed development.

There will be an impact on local property values as premium prices were paid by all owners around the golf course to be in a community around a golf course. The newest Royal York Estates development consists of 46 new homes with a value of over 25 million dollars which were bought by people who wanted to live next to the golf course and they paid for that privilege. Specialist reports show that the loss of the golf course will mean a minimum 20% loss of value in those homes alone. Other homes built over the last 25 years around the golf course will also suffer substantial losses. Lower values will also be reflected in lower property taxes which then affect everyone in Armstrong as the City tries to meet its budget needs. It is a well known fact that the City is at its limit in its water supply and the capacity of its

sewage treatment facilities. Your proposed large development will severely affect all our tax rates to pay for the major infrastructure improvements to sustain the new homes. There is a misconception that new homes bring in more tax dollars to pay for these infrastructure costs but in the real world, property taxes are paid to utilize city services such as snow removal, fire services, RCMP services, water and sewer treatment costs, schools and library costs. There is no pot of gold for new infrastructure coming out of any development. The location of the land is diagonally across the city from all the amenities the community has provided for families. The skateboard park, hockey arena, swimming pool and all the junior, middle and senior schools are a long way from the development. School bus limits do not include service to the golf course area. There is less expensive land nearer to the family amenities which could be built on to create affordable family homes in the community. I moved to Armstrong over 25 years ago and chose the City because the golf course was convenient. As a loyal member of the club for all these years, I have had the opportunity to manage a Geezer's Golf group who number close to 35 active members who have played weekly in the group for close to 20 years. In addition, there are over 75 members in the Senior Men's and Ladies golf groups who also have played weekly for over 15 years. The local Legion golfers also have a weekly game on the course. As you can see, the course provides Seniors from the North Okanagan with the opportunity to be active throughout the summer, meet with friends and be introduced to new friends. To lose this golf course for the sake of a housing development which has yet to prove its benefits to the community would be a disaster for all current residents and local visitors to Armstrong.

As mentioned above, the young people of Armstrong have been initiated into the game of golf and with some creative thoughts towards increasing the opportunities for our youth, the next generations will grow and love the game provided by a convenient golf course.

I am assuming you are getting one side of the story from your company directors but we feel you have not been fully aware of the concerns from the Armstrong community. Our attempts to spread the word through the local media have been very limited because the advertising dollars of Kal Tire outweigh the negative publicity of the development by Kal Tire. A letter I wrote to the Vernon Morning Star was edited to remove the reference to Kal Tire and N & T Properties as the editor obviously could understand the implications of attaching the prominent name Kal Tire to such a contentious issue in the North Okanagan.

We are at a loss of why Kal Tire with a long history of philanthropy by its founder Tom Foord and his wife Nora now feels that they should proceed with the destruction of a very popular recreational green space in a small town for the sake of profits for a multimillion dollar international company.

Also Kal Tire's dominant name within the City of Vernon with regards to sport facilities is being undermined by your proposed actions in Armstrong. I see this year your marketing department has actively promoted the company name with prominent signs and jersey badges on many of the CFL teams to promote your support for sports. We cannot see how your actions to destroy a sport in Armstrong fit into that same positive image.

On behalf of the members of our Society I would like to invite you to Armstrong to speak to the community on the merits of your proposed development and explain how it will improve

the lifestyle of the people who currently live in this small town. I will make sure the two young men mentioned at the top of this letter are also in attendance so you can directly explain how their future golf enjoyment is being destroyed by your company.

We are asking you to reconsider your proposal to buy the land and let our community continue to enjoy our favourite summer sport as we have for over 25 years.

Lindsay Thachuk
President of the Armstrong Green Space Society
250 546 2756

Hi Lindsay,

Robert Foord passed on a letter from you regarding the Royal York Golf Course. Please note that Kal Tire is a completely separate entity from N&T Properties. Kal Tire is not involved in the Royal York project. If you have any questions or concerns please reach out to the current property owner Todd York.

Kind Regards,

Andrew Kurbis
N&T Properties Ltd.

Hello Andrew,

Thanks for your response to the letter I delivered to Robert Foord in early August.

As your offices are within the Kal Tire building and you are the grandson to Tom Foord who created Kal Tire it is more than obvious that N & T properties is associated with Kal Tire despite the 'corporate registration' that makes your company look like a separate entity. Your rental property on 48th was also built on Kal Tire land.

As for our extensive list of concerns, the corporate structure in no way negates the monetary and social cost to the Armstrong community if your development goes ahead.

The invitation is still open for you to attend a meeting in Armstrong to explain your objectives and to hear from the concerned residents.

Lindsay Thachuk
President of the Armstrong Green Space Society