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Sept. 5, 2023

To Mayor and Council, City of Prince George,
C/O: CityClerk@princegeorge.ca – please include this correspondence on Council meeting agenda for Sept 11.

Should I not be able to attend the meeting, I'm writing regarding to the request from Caledonia Nordic Ski Club (CNSC) that the City provide a letter of support for their application to the Province of BC for an expanded Licence of Occupation at the Otway site. Ultimately, the Province of BC will process the application, provide opportunity for public comment, assess the documentation provided, and make a decision regarding appropriate land use. CNSC is requesting the City provide a letter supporting that application for an increased area of operation. As the current Director of Trails on the board of CNSC, and a neighbourhood resident, I'd like to provide my perspective.

The club's constitution invests the board and executive with the responsibility to secure lands for participation in the club's activities – which are healthy, nature-based, year-round sport and recreation, focused primarily Nordic Skiing. The preparation of this application, to me, represents the board upholding those responsibilities and taking a proactive approach to securing lands in response to industrial activity, gravel mining, as well as possible and actual private and Crown land sales and development on and around the current Otway tenure.

Characterization and assumptions regarding the trail or trails that could exist in the application area are premature and do not account for direction given by the Province of BC, nor the club's design, deliberation, and evaluation of any future proposed trail project. There are currently no specific trail projects proposed for that area. CNSC trail use and density is highest close to the main lodge—which is distant from the proposed expansion—in an area that was historically clear-cut following pine beetle infestation, and which also saw informal/unsanctioned singletrack trail building. The club now has a Trail Building and Maintenance policy (passed in 2022) that governs both Nordic and singletrack trail development within the tenure, and which includes project proposal, review, and consultation. In addition, the club has a functioning Trails Committee made up of diverse club members who make consensus recommendations to the CNSC Board of Directors regarding proposed trail projects and the need for related consultation. Generally, the Nordic ski trails in similar terrain at CNSC are lower density and only so wide as to allow passage of a grooming machine, a width that is acceptable even in BC Parks for trails of the same purpose and type, where appropriate.

Personally, CNSC and Otway have significantly enabled my family and I to stay, live, and work in Prince George since coming here in 2009, enjoying the outdoors year-round and providing much-needed recreation in the dark winter months, as well as summer camps and activities. I have served on the board of directors to help shape a positive future for the club, which provides accessible, healthy, outdoor recreation opportunities for residents in and around the City of Prince George. I hope you find this information helpful in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Phil Mullins