

WTA President's Report - October 20th, 2024

Let's begin with some of the highlights for the year. Last June, the WRC 30 year anniversary party was a huge success. The WRC has operated in this temporary facility for over 30 years.....through some challenging times.....at no cost to the tax payer.....to become a popular, valued community hub.

The celebration was a brilliant idea by Jamie and the WRC team.. The courts were full and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with Pete and Marjorie.....and reminisce about their years in Whistler managing the club. The band was great and once the music started the dance floor was full.

The WTA contributed by promoting the event, constructing the wall of memories, and holding a silent auction to fund raise for our campaign for a new WRC. A special thanks to WTA directors Michael, Ansa, and Andrew. They were on hand to help with the event. Michael put together the wall of memories. Ansa helped with the silent auction. And Andrew was the event photographer. Esther will give us an account on how much money was raised.

Jamie and Val recently reported that tennis player participation in tournaments and clinics is on the rise with most events being oversubscribed. The only thing holding us back is the size and condition of the facility. Thank you Jamie, Olly, Val, and the WRC team. We are very happy that they have been able to secure a lease for another year. The WTA was supportive of WRC management team throughout the negotiations. Thank you WTA directors Guy and Ben for your participation.

Since our last AGM there has been no visible progress towards advancing the Northlands rezoning process and replacing the WRC.

In September, we contacted Dale Mikkelsen, the senior planner on the file, to make sure he is aware that the lack of information and the length of the Northlands process has real negative costs. It jeopardizes the chance of a successful transition to a new facility and it jeopardizes the continuous operation of a multi-use racket centre that is highly valued by many hundreds of Whistler residents.

Dale reported back that he will be updating council on the Northlands rezoning process in October. I have checked online and Northlands is not on council's agenda for October 22nd, which is the last council meeting in October. Another self imposed deadline missed.

The WTA board continues to meet with other community groups and associations seeking support for a WRC replacement facility. Ansa, myself, and Ben Thomas from the Sea to Sky Pickleball Club met Barrett Fisher, CEO of Tourism Whistler. Barrett understands the need to weather proof the resort but would like to see hard data that proves success from racquet clubs in other mountain resorts. That is not so easy to get. Many businesses are reluctant to open their books to someone they don't even know. We say look no further than the WRC which could easily fill an indoor/outdoor facility twice the size of what we have now..... and yet no one from council or Tourism Whistler have contacted WRC management to see what they have learned after over four years managing the club.

We also met Louise Walker, executive director of the Whistler Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber membership is focused on employee housing supply but Louise was personally supportive of the growing need for indoor/outdoor recreation as our community expands.

Last but not least, Michel D'Artois, Guy Darby and myself met with the Mature Action Committee, MAC. MAC is looking for a permanent home for their programming, classes, and meetings. Many MAC members are pickleball players and tennis players and regular users of the WRC. A future facility could accommodate their needs for more than

recreation, if the facility is designed and configured with auxiliary meeting spaces. MAC can be a strong ally in the campaign for a future facility. We will meet again soon. MAC is working on defining their needs and aspirations.

Esther and I attended the Tennis BC AGM by Zoom. Almost all members participate by Zoom. Unfortunately the proposed West Vancouver indoor tennis and pickleball facility has been put on the back burner. I think it is a matter of funding. The executive reported that tennis continues to grow across the province but the lack of indoor courts is impeding the growth in British Columbia.

Ben, Robert, and myself keep the lines of communications open with Curtis Neeser from the Beedie Group. Ben has been communicating with Curtis about the recent difficulties over the lease renewal. This week I contacted Curtis. He has nothing new to share about the rezoning process but he did express his satisfaction that the lease has been resolved for this year. The relationship has proved to be valuable in the past, such as getting the courts resurfaced, and hopefully will help as the process moves slowly along.

The WTA continues to support the Spruce Grove solution as one of the best options for a new location. We have shown that Spruce Grove can work for both the Waldorf school and a future WRC if that what the mayor, council, and community decides. The WTA also supports doing an thorough environmental assessment of Beedie's land at 4700 Blackcomb Way to see if the facility could be located on that location while conserving the environmental value of the property.

The mayor and all councillors are on the record stating that they do not want to see the Northlands development result in the loss of a multi-use racquet centre in Whistler. Most have stated, "Nothing less than we have now". Our position is what we have now is not good enough to meet current or future needs of the community & resort.

One last thing. There is a great opportunity to advocate for the WRC and a future multi-use racquet centre. It's a program, run by the library, called Borrow a Councillor. You can book an appointment online for a one-on-one, face to face, half hour discussion with either the mayor or some of the other councillors. The link is <https://www.whistlerlibrary.ca/borrow-a-councillor/>

I borrowed Mayor Jack.

Thank you. There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion at the end of the meeting.