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Golf
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Surrey golf course fights being purchased and shut down by the city



By Justin McElroy Web Producer
Global News

WATCH: A rally will be held at Surrey City Hall tomorrow, to protest the city's appropriation of the family-owned Riverside Golf Centre. It's been expropriated as part of the city's plan to create more green space. Jill Bennett reports.



The owner of Riverside Golf in Surrey says his little golf course isn't going down without a fight.

"We're hoping it'll only be the public outrage that will change the politician's minds," says Ken Poirier, owner of Riverside Golf Course.

For more than 50 years, the par 3 course and driving range in south Surrey has been in his family. But this summer, the City of Surrey expropriated the property so a marsh could be built and Crescent Road** extended.



Poirier isn't saying the exact amount the city has expropriated it for, but says they've valued it as a property for one rural home – pennies, he says, to what it should be worth.

"We couldn't even buy a fraction back of the land we would need to try and move our business," he says.

"We're being thrown off our land, our business closed, they're taking away our livelihood. This is what I've done for virtually my entire life. At this age, what else am I going to do?"

The city of Surrey wouldn't comment on why they took the golf course, but cited the ruling made earlier this year by inquiry officer Mark Underhill on why the action was legal.

"I find that the rapid population growth and development in the city more than justifies the city strategically identifying and acquiring additional parkland as it has done there, particularly when there is potential for creating a continuous greenway along the water, and creating connections between biodiversity conservation hubs," wrote Underhill.

Poirier says the ruling doesn't make sense.

"We're already a park like facility, and instead of passive recreation, people get active recreation. We already achieve what they state and much more. We're part of the community, the social fabric."

For now, Poirier is in the process of appealing the city's appraisal of the land. He's also gathered a petition with hundreds of signatures and is holding a rally before Monday's council meeting – although the city won't allow him to present the signature because of the expected legal action.

"It's heartbreaking for us," he says, adding that if things don't change, he'll be forced to leave the land by the end of winter.

"This has been in our family, as a youngster I used to pick up the balls almost seven days a week on the driving range. We're fighting."

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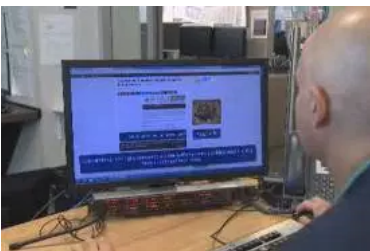
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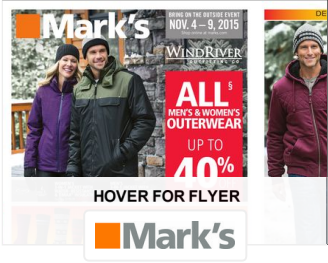
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