

## Surrey golf course operators vow to fight city takeover

City took ownership in June after expropriation that netted family \$3.25 million

By Dan Fumano, The Province November 2, 2015

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**Ken Poirier says the City of Surrey's action in effect made his family 'squatters on our own land.'** Ric Ernst/PNG

**Photograph by: Ric Ernst , PROVINCE**

The family who has run a golf course for the last 50 years say they plan to fight the City of Surrey's plan to shut them down.

Ken Poirier, whose family owned [Riverside Golf Centre](#) from 1966 until June of this year, planned a rally for Monday evening outside city hall to protest the expropriation of the 16-acre property on King George Boulevard. The city wants to create a park and extend a highway.

Poirier has also started a petition to attract community support, and said the rally could be the first of many. The city took ownership of the Riverside Golf Centre property in June for \$3.25 million, which Poirier called "a fraction of the real value."

"Basically, they made us squatters on our own land," Poirier said.

The city is "taking away our livelihood and leaving us with so little money that we can't even buy another 16 acres of land, we can't build a building, we can't build a range, we can't build a golf course."

Over years, several interested prospective buyers contacted the family, Poirier said, even though the property was never put up for sale.

Anthony Capuccinello, Surrey’s assistant city solicitor, said the city has followed the process set out in the [Expropriation Act](#) in this case, but declined to comment further because he understood the Poiriers plan to file a claim in B.C. Supreme Court seeking additional compensation.

Poirier said he hopes they might be able to find an alternative and avoid a court challenge. They have hired an appraiser to produce an independent valuation report for the property, and that process is under way.

In February, a month after the city filed the expropriation notice, the Poiriers requested an independent inquiry. Following a two-day hearing, inquiry officer Mark Underhill recommended the expropriation be approved.

Underhill wrote that the question of whether the city’s proposed park was necessary or not was outside the scope of the inquiry, and noted: “While I appreciate that the (Poiriers) may find that conclusion frustrating or disappointing, it is my view that the plain language of the Act requires such a result.”

On the current Riverside Golf site, the city plans to create a highway connection between King George Boulevard and Winter Crescent by extending Crescent Road. The rest of the property would be turned into a conservation area for “biodiversity conservation” and “passive recreation.”


In the inquiry report, Underhill wrote that the Poiriers emphasized that Riverside Golf Centre “currently offers the community an opportunity to enjoy natural scenery and biodiversity while enjoying an admittedly more active recreation opportunity.”

Evan Cooke, president of the B.C. Expropriation Association, said many people don’t realize that when they hold fee simple title to land in Canada, that title is “ultimately subject to the government’s right to take it back by way of expropriation,” if they deem it is in the public interest.

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