

Mis-Use of Scenic Acres Park Needs Action Now

A regional destination school should not be forced into a mature, fully built out residential neighbourhood, at the expense of land fully developed as a recreational facility utilized and enjoyed by the community at large.

Save Our Park Mandate

The Save Our Park Committee (SOPC) was formed in response to widespread community opposition to the surprise announcement of a regional school going into the community's fully developed recreational facility. A petition is in circulation that asks to halt the current work and reassess more appropriate sites in NW Calgary. It has been signed by over 3,000 individuals and continues to grow. The Honourable Sandra Jansen has advocated preservation of the Park and requested a halt of the proposed development until the viability of suggested alternate sites is examined. Councillor Ward Sutherland has pushed for a solution and offered to ensure that the permitting process will meet FrancoSud's timeline.

SOPC requests that:

- The school construction project in SA Park be halted immediately and the best site determined. This substantial project is apparently driven by perceived construction timelines; not an objective site review.
- FrancoSud's (CSFS) need for a school in Northwest Calgary is met on a timely basis at a site best suited for a regional elementary school.
- The engagement of the Honourable Sandra Jansen and Councillor Ward Sutherland is acknowledged by our provincial and municipal governments. Alberta Infrastructure, on behalf of CSFS, is encouraged to construct the Northwest regional school in a more appropriate location without undue delay.

The Scenic Acres Community Association (SACA) Board has endorsed this mandate. SOPC further recommends this regional school not be located on any site with similar characteristics to SA Park and community consultation lacking in our case take place with full transparency.

Background

The land use designation for SA Park permits a variety of special purpose uses including "School" and "Park". Scenic Acres Park (SA Park) is fully developed and heavily used year round for organized sports and recreational activities both by Scenic Acres residents and the public at large. A Scenic Acres community petition resulted in a 2012 City special tax bylaw for a levy of \$60 per household to finance enhanced green space care; SA Park is a key community green space centrally located within the community. Local elementary school needs are satisfied through Scenic Acres School and Monsignor E. L. Doyle; neither operates at capacity. CBE had an option to build an elementary school at this location but opted for an alternate site within Scenic Acres. CSFS was apparently given joint title to SA Park by the City in 2011; the community was not advised. In February 2014 then Premier Alison Redford announced that a Francophone regional elementary school would be constructed in Scenic Acres. With no prior community consultation SA Park was chosen as the development site. The planned school will accommodate 400 students; we understand eight reside in Scenic Acres.

This has not been a transparent process. In response to passionate support from the community to keep SA Park, eight potential alternate sites were re-assessed by the City's Joint Use Coordinating Committee (JUCC). We are advised that some sites have characteristics that would satisfy regional school requirements. The follow-up to that assessment was disappointing. CSFS stated concerns related to potential delays in the school completion as rationale for staying with the SA Park location. Notwithstanding our request for a pause to allow for a thorough review process, considerable effort has gone into development plans for construction on SA Park and less effort given to finding the right location for the Francophone school. SOPC remains committed to oppose development of SA Park and continues to advocate preservation of the Park in its current state.

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