



Our Nanaimo Curling Club

A Look Into the Future

Communique Prepared by: **The Strategic Planning Committee** **Nov 17, 2007**

Draft

A Five Year Strategic Plan for the Nanaimo Curling Club (NCC)

Curling in Canada has grown in popularity at the elite level with the addition of curling at the Olympics and coverage provided by TV for the Canadian and World Championship events. At the same time, curling at the club level has continued to be challenged by dwindling memberships, aging facilities, changing demographics and increasing costs. To address these challenges, many clubs across Canada have taken steps to change from socially oriented clubs to business oriented ventures. In so doing they have developed strategic plans for the next five years and a process for a new management infrastructure.

The Canadian Curling Association (CCA) has recognized the threat to the future of curling and has established programs to assist clubs to develop and implement these plans. This has given the NCC a unique opportunity to take advantage of other clubs' experiences and the assistance of the CCA.

The NCC recently spent a weekend in a strategic planning session with the facilitation of the CCA to develop our own draft plan. We now wish to share this plan with curlers to solicit feedback and support such that we can begin implementing some of the initiatives for the next curling season. Our intent is to position the NCC on a better business footing as an integrated and unified club, with full membership, while respecting our legacy commitments. As a result we will grow our membership, improve our facilities, find additional funding sources, and improve the curling experience for both existing and new members into the long term. We request your support, suggestions and comments so that we can move our club in a direction that will ensure long term sustainability.

Why Is This Needed?

- While curlers continues to enjoy excellent ice and rock conditions, the facilities which provide these are now over 40 years old and will soon need replacement and upgrading:
 - to make the entire building accessible to everyone in the community.
 - to plan for the replacement of the ice plant.
 - to create an inviting and friendly atmosphere.
 - to attract increased non-curling rental revenues.
 - to reduce our carbon footprint.
- The need to promote curling in our community and grow the sport:
 - to increase the number of curlers at our club.
 - to improve our membership retention rate.
 - to target recruitment efforts, initial focus on the 20 – 40 age group.
- The need to establish a new governance infrastructure that can provide representation for and accountability to all curlers:
 - to manage the club for the benefit of all curlers uniformly.

- to shift priorities to address demographics and changing curling needs.
 - to maximize revenues, and minimize costs to the curlers.
- The need to establish and maintain long range planning, particularly sound financial planning, in addition to the short term management of our operations so that we can:
 - anticipate expenses.
 - have funds in reserve.
 - work realistically towards the changes that will transform the facility.
 - The need to expand and maximize our sources of revenue so that we can:
 - keep direct costs to the curling community at an acceptable level.
 - be a leader in providing services and facilities to the entire community.
 - coordinate advertising and sponsorship revenue.
 - The need to provide a central professionally managed financial management and reporting regime both for operations and long term planning to include:
 - all revenue coming into the club, such as fees, sponsorships, grants and awards, advertising, kitchen/cafeteria/pro shop revenues, etc.
 - all expenses required to maintain and improve the club and its facilities.

Of critical importance is to maintain a complete auditable record for revenue and expenses which will facilitate our applications for grants and awards. The Special Olympics, Junior and Senior leagues are important programs to support grant applications. These are not adequately reported under our current organization.

- To provide to all our curlers a sense of appreciation and ownership in the club:
 - unified and integrated governance structure.
 - coordinated volunteer opportunities effectively managed.
 - reasonable fees and enjoyable curling experience.
 - comprehensive and timely communications.
 - cohesive and collaborative atmosphere.

What Are We Proposing?

The plan addresses six strategic areas for attention. In some cases we will start activities with implementation planned over several years, such as building renovations, while others will be implemented for the start of the next curling season. The Strategic Plan covers a 5 year term and is intended to be reviewed and modified annually based on member input and results to date. No proposal will proceed without full funding being in place. Some of the highlights are summarized below:

- **Building and Facilities** – The plan suggests many areas for upgrades, renovations and looks at timing and funding issues. Our facilities are dated and, in some cases, in a need of urgent repairs.
- **Governance Structure** - Within the current structure there are independently operated clubs and rental leagues in addition to the overall Nanaimo Curling Club. This makes the club very difficult to manage efficiently and effectively. We are proposing to integrate all clubs into one cohesive integrated and unified club so that all curlers can receive equal representation and opportunities. An organization will be developed to combine functional business responsibilities with representation for all interest groups on the new Board of Directors. There will be a transition plan to ensure that existing clubs and leagues are comfortable with the changes. An organization chart will be made available. Included are several proposed committees to address revenue generation, communications, financial planning, membership and volunteers. For example, the Finance Committee will establish policy for the financial operations of the club and initiate and maintain a five year Capital Spending Plan and Reserve Fund. We hope to have these management initiatives ready for the spring AGM so that they can be fully implemented for the next curling season.
- **Revenue Generation** - It was felt that we were missing many revenue generation opportunities and the plan lists several initiatives to address this important area. These include increased advertising in the club, coordinated sponsorships and increased marketing and rental of our facilities for both curling and non-curling events, including beyond the curling season.
- **Enhanced Program and Services** – An integrated club should facilitate and encourage more broadly based participation in club activities. The plan lists several initiatives to make the curling experience more enjoyable for all. Included are expanded youth and junior curling, enhanced training and development, opportunities to curl skins or doubles and additional social events.
- **Membership** - Consistent with the desire to integrate the club is the corresponding need to have a broader membership regime. Currently over half the curlers who curl regularly in the club are not members and some of this group see no benefit to membership. Conversely, the understanding of some non-curling members of the community is that curling is exclusively for members only. A desirable outcome would be to change these attitudes by having all regular curlers paying annual curling dues, having representation in the governance structure, and voting privileges at the NCC AGM. A membership committee will examine ways to achieve this goal.

Extending membership and its privileges to all curlers can be accomplished in a manner that:

- a) will not diminish the historical contributions of those who founded the club;
 - b) will not diminish the rights of the current certificate owners;
 - c) will begin a process to include those curlers who currently do not consider themselves to be included; and,
 - d) will provide a more stable base upon which to plan the future of the club and the facility.
- Volunteer Coordination – A committee is proposed with broad representation across the club. The plan lists several initiatives to encourage and reward volunteerism across the club.

What Comes Next?

We have completed a draft strategic plan, which is supported by the NCC Board of Directors. We now wish to consult with curlers, members and others, to ensure we have not overlooked any opportunities and that our plan is moving in the direction you would like to see us go. We propose to proceed as follows:

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| ➤ Communicate Strategic Plan to all curlers | Jan 2008 |
| ➤ Incorporate suggestions to Strategic Plan | Feb 2008 |
| ➤ Develop details of club Governance Structure, including Finance Committee and other committees | Mar 2008 |
| ➤ Develop details of club membership | Mar 2008 |
| ➤ Develop and communicate Transition Plan for Governance and Membership | Apr 2008 |
| ➤ Obtain legal council for Constitutional changes and gain approval at NCC AGM | May 2008 |

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