

Subject: [Fwd: [Fwd: Letter To The Editor]]

Date: Sat, 27 Apr 2002 18:08:17 -0700

From: Brian Platts <brian_platts@telus.net>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: [Fwd: Letter To The Editor]

Date: Wed, 24 Apr 2002 14:55:11 -0700

From: Brian Platts <brian_platts@telus.net>

To: Allan Orr <allandorr@shaw.ca>, Angela Trudeau <a.trudeau@canada.com>, Bill Tracey <bill_tracey@telus.net>, Cathy Adams <cathyadams@canada.com>, Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>, Dave Sadler <davesadler@telus.net>, Eric Andersen <eric_g_andersen@hotmail.com>, John Hunter <johnhunter@idmail.com>, Liz James <cagebc@yahoo.com>, Maureen Bragg <m.bragg@shaw.ca>, Peter Thompson <bedeconsulting@shaw.ca>, FONVCA <fonvca@fonvca.org>

FYI

Subject: Letter To The Editor

Date: Tue, 23 Apr 2002 19:30:33 -0700

From: Brian Platts <brian_platts@telus.net>

To: northshore news <editor@nsnews.com>

Dear Editor,

I was among those residents who packed into North Vancouver District Council Chambers on Thursday, April 18, to attend a public meeting on the proposal to install billboards throughout the community.

The advertised purpose of the meeting was to allow members of the public to express their views on the subject directly to Council. But the way the meeting was handled by Mayor Don Bell was quite disgraceful.

In recognition of the large number of people signed up to speak, each person was limited to five minutes of speaking time. While the purpose of the meeting was for Council to hear from the public, the Mayor allowed a representative from Viacom (the billboard sign company) 10 minutes right off the top to introduce the subject and the proposal. This format seemed fair, but what actually transpired certainly was not.

The Viacom representative proceeded to give a full Power-Point presentation that lasted 25 minutes. The presentation included what the company proposes in the way of "advertising structures" and of twinning the Dollarton bridge and a pedestrian overpass of the Parkway. Mayor Bell never once interrupted the presentation nor encouraged him to hurry up.

Following the presentation, all members of Council asked questions of the Viacom representative. While most of the questions were relatively

short, the answers definitely were not. Councillor Denault (the instigator of the billboard proposal) asked friendly, leading questions that were clearly expected by the Viacom man, allowing him to expound even longer. By the time he left the podium and took his seat in the gallery, it was 8:00 p.m. -- 55 minutes after this so-called PUBLIC meeting had begun!!!

Just prior to calling the first speaker on the list, the Mayor made it clear that members of the public were not to speak to the issue of the bridge or overpass (even though the Viacom man was permitted to); speakers could address only the subject of billboard advertising as a way of funding capital projects. In other words, no opportunity to counter Viacom's faulty assumptions about the need for the bridge. By way of enforcement, a number of speakers were interrupted by the Mayor and scolded that they were not to talk about the bridge. With speakers already limited to 5 minutes, if they had wanted to talk about Viacom's proposal then they should have been permitted to do so. The performance was typical of Mayor Bell, interrupting and confusing members of the public during their allotted speaking time. Viacom, on the other hand, went far beyond their ten minute limit and spoke directly about the "benefits" of the proposed bridge and overpass -- all without a peep from His Worship.

In the end, neither Mayor Bell's inconsistency nor the limitations imposed on the public's right to speak were enough to silence an overwhelming "thumbs down" to Viacom's billboards. The big question is, will Council pay attention?

Sincerely,
Brian Platts
3187 Beverley Crescent
North Vancouver, B.C. V7R 2W4
Phone: 604-985-5104