

**Subject: [Fwd: Preparing for the Nov. 16 Election: Original]**

**Date:** Thu, 10 Oct 2002 19:18:41 -0700

**From:** Brian Platts <brian\_platts@telus.net>

**To:** Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

---

**Subject: Preparing for the Nov. 16 Election: Original**

**Date:** Thu, 10 Oct 2002 18:02:19 -0700

**From:** Allan Orr <allandorr@shaw.ca>

**To:** Fonvca <fonvca@fonvca.org>

November Election: The Time for Action is Now

Every three years we go to the polls to vote for municipal councils. Of those who vote many do so out of a sense of duty but without much understanding of what the current Council has done for the last three years. People who do follow municipal affairs often become the neighbourhood source for candidate information. But if we have a good grasp of the issues and some knowledge of the actual performance of our local Council, the task of selecting competent candidates will be simplified and the results should be more politically satisfying.

We need to remember that the outcome of a municipal election will determine whether our communities will be livable or beset by traffic and other problems; whether bylaws and their enforcement will meet the needs of our communities, and whether our basic infrastructure is maintained or neglected. We found out from Walkerton, Ontario about how important it is to have honest, competent managers at District Hall. But who selects these managers?

It takes a minor crisis before people become involved, if only temporarily, in municipal government. A zoning battle erupts over a new housing development or a proposal for a big box store. People react strongly over traffic issues, especially when traffic volumes threaten their quiet community. Municipal chambers become crowded whenever some special interest feels threatened or a new bylaw is proposed that will have an economic impact on hundreds of people. Citizens often discover during debate that they disagree vehemently with councillors whom they voted for. How could they have been so wrong?

You would think citizens would show interest in the budget process. How can they? Most budgets are constructed so that only accountants can explain them. You would think the mayor would state his objectives, goals and priorities in these budgets. Taxpayers in the District of North Vancouver still don't know that their councils have depleted reserve funds to the tune of \$72 million over the past six years and still the tax increase in 2002 was the third highest among 17 municipalities. The last two weeks before the election is too late to have an intelligent discussion about financial management. People need to prepare themselves.

We have a serious problem when the majority of citizens don't vote and allow a small minority of electors to determine the outcome of the election. How can we encourage people to take more interest in local government?

Here are seven suggestions about how to prepare for the November election. If we as citizens just focus our attention on who is running and neglect the big issues, November 16 will be a wasted opportunity to get the government we deserve.

\*Talk about local issues at home and with neighbors.

\*Clip articles from the local papers and keep a file for election time

\*Find out how your tax money is spent. Tune into Shaw Cable on Monday nights or Saturday mornings. Use your computer to read Council agendas and staff reports. Community Associations often have web sites which cover many major issues that you will want to read about.

\*Consider writing a letter to the local paper, or questioning a candidate, or a sitting member of Council.

\*Participate at a meeting of your local community association in September or October.

\*Attend All-Candidates meetings in October and November and ask a question about an issue that concerns you.

\*Discuss with friends and neighbours candidate brochures and advertisements.

You are ready to VOTE.

Allan Orr,  
847 Roche Point Drive,  
North Vancouver. Ph: 929-4404.