

Subject: District garbage 'collection' and other taxable services

Date: Wed, 27 Feb 2002 01:20:18 +0000 (GMT)

From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: Mayor Don Bell and Council <dbell@district.north-van.bc.ca>

CC: kost@FONVCA.org

Mayor Bell, Members of Council
DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER,
Box 86218,
NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C.
V7L 4K1

26 February, 2001

RE: DISTRICT GARBAGE 'COLLECTION' AND OTHER TAXABLE SERVICES

Mayor Bell, Members of Council:

First of all, I should emphasize that this is a personal letter and nothing to do with CAGE - although it might well be.....

For the past few days, while their parents were away on business, I have been taking care of my granddaughters, staying in their Lynn Valley home.

Last Monday was garbage day and our almost full Schaefer cart was placed at the curb for collection. Hearing the truck go by, I went out to bring back the cart and found attached a yellow slip advising of *Solid Waste Can Limits* and of a required \$2/bag surcharge. That was the welcome to my week. I am royally steamed and, bearing in mind a little history, this is why:

Some years ago, Council asked District taxpayers to absorb a cost of around \$140 to purchase Schaefer carts that would attach to a mechanical lift on the trucks. Most complied, agreeing that it would simplify collection for the workers, reduce the weight workers were required to hoist, standardize collection procedures and, generally, contribute to a cleaner environment in the community. [We understand that many carts remain unsold at the Works Yard.]

The idea worked well for many years...until recently. Then we were all asked to measure down 8 inches or so from the top of the cart and to reduce the amount of our garbage. Yeah, right. So we did that. We also, more or less cheerfully, complied with District recycling efforts. We always had composted. We tied bows around waste cardboard. We peeled labels off glass and plastic jars. We washed them [using, of course, soapy, treated and sometimes Hydro-heated water from the taps - still not sure if that's a net gain for the environment.] Taxpayers also bought metal stands and the mandated 'clear plastic bags' for yard trimmings. Each time we bit the bullet a little more firmly, but still agreed we wanted a clean community.

Quite when it was that 'measuring down 8 inches' became the current "Schaefer cart half full" we're not sure....but that yellow card did it for me. We're sick of it, Council. Why don't you just charge us the taxes for garbage collection, let those who take the fancy engage in 'theft of time', and we'll take our own garbage to the dump? Because that, it seems, is what it's coming to.

There are five people in my daughter's family; and me to boot. Our family of six, then, is to be allowed only the same amount of garbage as the single, 80-something lady across the street who teeters to the top of her driveway each week with a full can? It just doesn't make sense. And before Clr. Harris begins with the "well, of course, a

larger family costs more for services and we must all do our bit for the environment," let me point out that we also pay a heck of a lot more in overall taxes to support government 'services'....income tax, PST, GST, fees, recycling levies, you name it.

And then there's the issue of the latest increase in water charges, proposed for the upcoming budget. In 2001, this same family paid out a total of \$703.92 for water from Canadian Springs because most of the time we cannot drink what comes out of the tap - it either tastes like chlorinated swimming pool water, or looks and smells like the stuff at the bottom of the girls' fish aquarium. That \$700 is nothing more nor less than another tax, paid for private replacement of a service that we've already paid the District to provide.

But let's get back to the garbage. In Council discussion some years ago, it was suggested that comparative outside quotes be obtained to determine what it would cost to have a private company do the collection work. That good suggestion went nowhere but now District taxpayers are expected to keep paying more and more to have less and less garbage to be taken away. Further, we are told now that we have to put yard trimmings in paper bags....have members of Council ever tried to put rose prunings or sticks in paper bags? Though I respect the positions you hold, I am really tempted to suggest that you've taken leave of your senses.

Maybe you all have the time to sit and chop sticks into little pieces to fit in a paper bag, tie ribbons on boxes and, now, truck your 1/2 Schaefer to the dump yourselves, but we do not...we're too busy working to try to make ends meet. Maybe you can afford to keep on investing in equipment for your latest and greatest ideas that future Councils will declare redundant a few years hence, but we cannot....we're too busy working to save enough to cover increased taxes for less and less service. Oh, and by the way, how many trees get chopped down to make the paper bags?

Dogs run free off leash and dig up our garden; beer bottles get thrown on the lawn and in bushes; old clunkers get sanded and painted in driveways ruining our summer weekends; drums get thumped until 3 a.m., and nary a by-law officer in sight, while we sit tight-lipped because we know that if we complain, the retaliation will only make matters worse.

In budget discussions a couple of years ago, Council was struggling to achieve a maximum 1% tax increase, and I can vividly recall specific councillors stressing that Staff was being asked to achieve cost efficiencies *without cutting services*. I see **absolutely** no evidence that they were even listening.

And so here we are in 2002, Heritage Fund virtually gone, District land still being depleted, reserve funds are drawn down, a \$500,000 CPC savings is quietly absorbed into the current District budget, taxes are going up, we drink water at retail prices, and we can darn well take our own garbage to the dump.

Well, I say, "A pox on all your houses. About all this Council is good for is to issue Development Variance Permits ad nauseum."

Sincerely,

Liz James

[604] 988-2066

Do You Yahoo!?

Get personalised at [My Yahoo!](#).