

Subject: Signs**Date:** Sat, 24 May 2003 13:14:34 -0700**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>**To:** "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>**CC:** "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

Unsightly signs (minor billboards) on sticks, ugly and usually made of cardboard, deteriorating rather quickly in inclement weather, are springing up all over the District again. It is a disease which seems to afflict the District on a recurring basis. The disease starts off innocuous enough with only a few signs showing up here and there. It gradually increases and eventually gets totally out of control. Signs advertising everything from real estate to coffee mugs are seen everywhere. When it gets too bad people start to complain and that is when it usually comes before Council as an agenda item.

Council then orders a study costing at least ten thousand dollars in staff time only to discover that sign bylaws have been in place all along and it was just a lack of political will to enforce them. Subsequent Council debates are accompanied by much posturing and exhaling of hot air and it takes up much time. At that stage, staff is instructed to tighten up and enforce the bylaws as they are paid to do. Eventually things start to settle down only to be repeated a few years hence if we are lucky. If it weren't so expensive it would be hilarious. Unfortunately, it costs a great deal of money but it also has other bad side effects. It certainly demonstrates municipal incompetence but, above all, it is a sign of a lack of being cultured and lack of civic pride.


The worst offenders are the community organizations who are advertising their special events. It includes arts as well as sport groups. They are putting up signs everywhere uglifying the municipality although this certainly is not their intention. They are doing it for a good cause, of course. It is just that they don't care enough that the municipality looks like a bazaar instead of a civilized community looking neat and tidy. Proliferation of unsightly signs has the effect of dragging the municipality down to the lowest possible level of appearance. People on an increasing scale start to imitate the bad example. Up go more ugly signs leading to untidy premises. If them, why not me. Why bother cutting the grass on the boulevard in front of my house and keep things tidy - not to speak of picking up debris left behind by the members of the "anticulture" otherwise known as "yahoos"

In an effort to rectify the situation I put forward yet another motion to resolve the issue. I have done so on several occasion in the past but without success. After all the idea of governance in the District is not to solve problems, certainly not under the present leader, but to talk about them and justify the waste of tax dollars on a grand scale and to do so with gusto.

In Europe and in most parts of the world, where cities take pride in their appearance and where tourists are especially sensitive to clutter, they provide opportunities to advertise. It takes place under controlled conditions. There are round concrete columns on civic squares which will do the trick but there are also other very effective and inexpensive solutions. One is an elongated attractive covered board big enough to be easily visible from the adjacent street which I presented to Council as an example of providing an opportunity which is functional and still looks attractive. But, with the exception of Councillors Nixon and Walton whol voted in favor, my motion was defeated.

One Councillor, who apparently grew up in the hinterland of a far away island, was particularly keen not to vote for the idea stating that she found these signs, albeit that they may be tattered, torn, soggy on the ground and an eyesore, very attractive since it showed that the community was active. The number one member of Council also cast his vote against it. Other than bafflegab, he offered no reason except to indicate by his gestures and irrelevant comments that he could not possibly vote for a motion presented by Councillor Crist, however sensible it may be.

Thus we will now go to the next round, which is more ugly signs, until it is time to have another study and hire more bylaw officers which is another way of saying until we can demonstrate yet again that, above everything else, we are what every educated resident knows already, namely incompetent.

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