

**Subject: Re: Changes to Recreation Vehicle/Boat Regulations**

**Date:** Tue, 06 Jan 2004 22:26:39 -0800

**From:** Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

**To:** Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

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I attach my remarks on this issue in text below and as a pdf documents.

6-January-2004

Your Worship & Members of Council,

There is an old adage - take nothing for granted. When the public hearing was announced for May13/2003 discussing some refinements of the parking of recreational vehicles I trusted council would protect the interests of the "silent majority". I was wrong. It is unfortunate that I was committed to make a presentation on the Community Charter to the Blueridge/Seymour Community associations that same evening. Not that my input would have changed things - I just would have had a more informed appraisal of the situation. I have been silent on this issue since the bylaw had not been adopted and went through a public hearing process.

I agree fully with Brian Platts' assessment. To discard the bylaw completely would be unreasonable (I really wanted to use other words, but restrained myself). In fact we should go back to a bylaw based on the original 1965 concept of requiring any boats or recreational vehicles (over 5.8 meters) to be parked either in a building or to the rear of the house. Exceptions would be provided only by appeal to council. Clean and simple. The changes adopted last night (Jan 5/2004) are highly open to abuse. Simply moving the boat or vehicle every 30 days is all that the bylaw requires. Recreational vehicles are almost always "in a condition fit for immediate use" (particularly since immediate is not defined). Without a solid, unambiguous bylaw, there a potential for a small group to damage the livability, views, and resale value of almost any of the residential homes in the District. The lack of complaints should not be used to judge the dissatisfaction of those who have to endure neighbours who park their recreation vehicles in their front yard. A simple survey stating the current bylaw and asking "Would you have any concerns or objections, if we allow people to permanently park large recreational vehicles in the front yard? - none, little, strong, very strong" might be quite revealing.

There are many homes that lack vehicular access to their back yards (mine included!). Those who wish to use large recreational vehicles should take this into account when they purchase a home. Offsite storage costs are minimal compared to the purchase price, insurance, and operating costs of such vehicles.

The (un)loading of recreational vehicles should have simply allowed for a 72hr period to address the slowpokes.

One councilor queried why a 19ft (5.8m) recreational vehicle was allowed to park in the front yard year-round but not a 19ft boat. The reason is that some people use their small recreational vehicle for basic transportation - something that can hardly be said for a boat.

With the legalization of secondary suites we would soon see more than 1 recreational vehicle parked in the front yard. Do we really want to encourage the Surrey look? Remember council, that once you relax a bylaw it takes about 30 years to eliminate the grand-fathered vehicles. Speaking of secondary suites, what is to prevent the occupation of the recreational vehicles while they are parked on the residential properties? It would seem that the only practical way to prevent this (and I assume you do want to prevent such occupations) is to not allow them to be parked there. Council seems on the edge of setting up trailer parks in our residential front yards!

Yours truly,

Corrie Kost  
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Brian Platts wrote:

> Mayor & Council:

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> Suppose I would like to build a structure in the front yard of my  
> property, say a modest garage. The process would necessitate drafting  
> building plans to be submitted to the District in order to receive a  
> permit. The proposed structure would have to be in compliance with all  
> Zoning Bylaw regulations with respect to maximum size, front and  
> sideyard setbacks, and height limitations. If the configuration of my  
> property prevented me from building the garage within the Zoning Bylaw,  
> I would have the option of applying for a variance, a process that would  
> give my immediate neighbours the opportunity to comment or express any  
> concerns on how the structure might affect their own properties.

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
> Now consider the parking and storage of recreational vehicles. During  
> the discussion of this issue last night, at least three members of  
> Council expressed the opinion that the parking and/or storing such  
> vehicles in front yards be permitted with no regulations other than the  
> Nuisance Abatement Bylaw which governs untidy premises. Unbelievable. It  
> was fortunate that the majority of Council saw fit to adopt the new  
> bylaw, even though it is weaker than the old regulations.

>

> Without any restrictions on recreational vehicles a resident could park  
> indefinitely -- as of right -- a massive RV or trailer (some are 40-feet  
> long and 12 feet high, the size of a tour bus) anywhere in his front  
> yard with no consideration to property line setbacks. Just imagine for a  
> moment living next to such a thing, or looking out your window every day  
> and seeing a huge RV stored in the front yard of the property across the  
> street. Would you be happy about that situation if it occurred to you?  
> How do you think it would affect your ability to sell your property if  
> your neighbour's huge RV dominated the streetscape or was parked right  
> up to your property line? How is it that all members of Council appear  
> to accept Zoning Bylaw regulations limiting the size, shape, and siting  
> of all built structures like carports and garages, yet advocate no

> limitations for parking and storing recreational vehicles?  
>  
> During the debate, I listened to a member of Council sympathize with  
> property owners who are unable to park their RVs or boats in their rear  
> yards. Well, at the risk of appearing insensitive, you would think that  
> if someone is going to buy a large RV or boat, then he has a  
> responsibility to consider first and foremost exactly where he plans on  
> storing it. I fail to see why his purchase should become a problem for  
> his neighbours. One member of Council suggested that neighbours should  
> resolve RV parking and storage problems among themselves rather than  
> relying on a bylaw. What a recipe for conflict! The simple fact is, not  
> everyone is reasonable and considerate and that is why we have rules and  
> regulations to fall back on.  
>  
> Using the Nuisance Abatement Bylaw to regulate the parking and storage  
> of recreational vehicles is fine for addressing unsightly and derelict  
> vehicles, but not for instances where the RV or stored boat is neat and  
> tidy but is otherwise huge and imposing on the neighbours. When this  
> issue is returned to Council next year, I can only hope that common  
> sense will prevail.  
>  
> Sincerely,  
> Brian Platts

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 <a href="#">6jan2003-response.PDF</a>	<b>Name:</b> 6jan2003-response.PDF <b>Type:</b> Portable Document Format (application/pdf) <b>Encoding:</b> base64
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