

Subject: [Fwd: Re: LRTA - The Light Rail Transit Association site - news items -sent by Malcolm Johnston and the Light Rail Committee]

Date: Thu, 18 Dec 2003 17:51:17 -0800

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: RE: LRTA - The Light Rail Transit Association site - news items -sent by Malcolm Johnston and the Light Rail Committee

Date: Fri, 19 Dec 2003 00:30:39 +0000 (GMT)

From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: "Barbara Sharp (Mayor)" <BSharp@cnv.org>

CC: dmjohnston@imag.net, pwlegood@sfu.ca, fonvca@fonvca.org

Mayor Barbara Sharp,
CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER
141 West 14th Street,
NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C.
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18 December 2003

RE: NORTH SHORE REPRESENTATION ON TRANSLINK/GVRD BOARDS

Dear Mayor Sharp:

Thank you for your response to my email letter of 15 December 2003, on the subject of North Shore representation on the TransLink board. My goodness; Mercury certainly is retrograde on the North Shore!

The short answer to the question you pose is: I am a taxpayer, living in a democracy, who is 'asked' to pay the bills for billion-dollar decisions being made by politicians. The longer answer is more complex.

In the opening paragraph of my earlier email, I was at pains to emphasize my concerns were with the process by which citizens are, or are not adequately represented at the TransLink table. In doing so, I am neither the first, the only, or the most outspoken person to have voiced those concerns.

Shoot the messenger(s) if you will, but either there is a problem with the TransLink/GVRD systems of governance, or there is a problem with the manner in which regional government activities are/are not communicated to the people who must pay the bills - or both. Why else would BC's Auditor-General have referenced 'problems with [TransLink] governance' in his report and recommended review and changes to that governance?

When elected representatives of my own municipality of residence - West Vancouver [no stereotyping, please] - ask for information about how energetically its official position was conveyed to TransLink during a recent vote on the 10-Year Plan, do I not have cause for concern?

When Clr. Nixon and others in NV District and Lions Bay and on Bowen Island ask similar questions, does that not indicate a wider problem?

When at least two municipalities feel such dissatisfaction with the current process that they feel constrained to consider leaving GVRD and GVTA to join another regional district, does that not tell us that there *are* severe problems with the *status quo*?

When Clr. Nixon asks DNV Staff to investigate and report back as to the feasibility of forming a 'North Shore Transportation Council' to enable a fully-informed, combined, joint-vote decision to be transmitted to TransLink, does that not suggest that he recognizes how little benefit North Shore taxpayers have been receiving from their relationship with the Region?

When District Mayor Bell has insufficient time to do much more than send a quick email asking for 'comments' from his council colleagues at 5:16 p.m. the night before he is to vote GVRD ratification of TransLink's approval of the RAV project, is that indicative of a full and democratic process?

Should GVRD/TransLink-imposed deadlines not have allowed more time for full discussion around District Council table and for a

formal, recorded vote on the matter - bearing in mind that \$2 billion of our money was being committed to a RAV project from which the North Shore will gain virtually nothing?

As to my "research" - you are quite correct, I did not call you directly, and for that I, somewhat reluctantly, apologize. Reluctantly, because telephone conversations are subject to misinterpretation and leave no record to act as reliable memory joggers. And reluctantly, because I have watched and attended many meetings - including those of the City of North Vancouver and Council of Councils, and including the much-repeated TransLink presentations.

In this instance, I also telephoned TransLink, twice, in an attempt to find out how all members of the TransLink Board voted on the 10-Year "Plan" and to see if a transcript would be available. The first time, I was told it was "too soon, information not available." The second time, I was transferred a couple of times until, on the third extension, I got a recording and left a voice-mail message. There has been no response.

One gets just a little frustrated at the secrecy of TransLink, and at the valuable time which has to be expended on the difficult task of trying to obtain information that should be freely available to the public. [A recent example would be the 'close-to-the-vest' resistance to communicating information about the recent New Flyer/NeoPlan-Skoda decision. Why did TransLink decide to spend \$32 million more for 17 buses less? Especially when there are ??? clean-air buses sitting unused in the yard - or were they sold?]

My recourse, then, has been to listen to discussions and concerns of various councils, look at what results, read my emails and media reports and then form my own opinions. In this regard, an Ipsos-Reid representative explained to the November 2001 Council of Councils meeting, that the industry formula for interpreting poll results indicates that, for every survey response received, they expect 250 others in the community to feel the same way. If I accept that formula, then my opinions could well be shared by a minimum of 250 North Shore citizens.

Finally, I cannot let pass the manner in which you conveyed your message - a message which addressed not one of the concerns I had raised. Until now, while I do not always agree with a vote result, I have very much respected the way in which the Jack Loucks and Barbara Sharp councils have shepherded development of your City. But now?

My email to you, while admittedly hard-hitting, was courteous. Your reply to me was not merely unacceptable rudeness to a taxpayer; of far more serious importance is that the communication was not worthy of an elected representative of City taxpayers. In my opinion, it also betrays your Oath of Office and demeans the position you hold.

Yours truly,

Liz James,
[604] 988-2066

P.S. May I know how you did vote on TransLink's 10-Year Plan?

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