

Subject: Re: Your email of December 12th to Lee Carlow

Date: Thu, 8 Jan 2004 20:40:55 +0000 (GMT)

From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: Alan Nixon <Alan_Nixon@dnv.org>

CC: fonvca@fonvca.org, Cathy Adams <cathyadams@canada.com>, Eric Andersen <eric_g_andersen@hotmail.com>, Maureen Bragg <m.bragg@shaw.ca>, Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>, Allan Orr <allandorr@shaw.ca>, Pat Higgs <patroberta@telus.net>, Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>, Bill Tracey <wrtracey@telus.net>

8 January 2004

Dear Clr. Nixon:

As you will see, this letter was begun before Christmas but fell prey to the last minute holiday scramble. As a result, it has lost some of its timely relevance but, in the main, my points are the same today as they were in December....Liz James

22 December 2003

Good Morning:

My apologies for the misquote. That goes to show why one should verify everything one hears! One of the reasons I referred to 'a councillor' even though the remark was being attributed to you, was that hiccuping my way through the DNV archive tape, I could not even find the item, let alone the exact quote.

What I can say is that I heard the misquote several times before I decided to do 'pen' the email to Ms. Carlow....but now to the subject itself.....

I am not too comforted by even the revised wording, "What does exist is the inability for all people of all income realms to be able to live in the district of North Vancouver." However, I don't how successful we can be at turning things around.

West Vancouver, aesthetically speaking, is a beautiful community, but I'm not convinced that all is well at its heart. When one hears [as I did] disparaging remarks about "Surrey truck drivers" and "crime coming across the bridges into West Vancouver..." one has to be concerned. Not only do such remarks betray the type of snobbery that I thought I left behind when I left England in 1956, but they also betray an ignorance of, or blindness to the endeavours of some West Vancouver residents.

In the past, I have been labelled a right-winger. Heavens! I even belonged to the Reform Party. Fiscally, and from the perspective of wanting government accountability, the label fits. However, unlike some right-wingers, I believe a community must have a strong social conscience if it is to be the best that it can be. So it disturbs me that your daughter had to move to Courtenay to live - if she would have preferred to stay in North Vancouver - especially when one reads the latest crime statistics for that Island community.

In an apparent attempt to make up in residential property taxes what the District lacks in commercial/industrial taxes, several past councils have embraced an accelerated residential development schedule.

Area development has, I believe, not only outstripped the community's ability to fund required infrastructure repair and capital renewal, it also has served to artificially increase property values due to the rapidly declining land bank.

Most important of all, such policies fly in the face of what most residents have said they want to see in their neighbourhoods.

Recent studies have shown that the theory, "increased density pays for itself in development cost charges and community benefits" is not supported by in-depth analysis. Personally, I have no quarrel with either development companies, or with the concept that company owners and investors are entitled to make a fair profit. However, this can only work to the benefit of everyone in the community, when a developer's right to do business is diligently offset by a need for them to adhere to the intent and the details of neighbourhood OCP's, as well as to tough standards, by-laws and zoning regulations established by government.

As one example, I submit that such has not been the case throughout the most recent re-developments in the Lynn Valley area where, to date, the changes have amounted to a significant increase in density, but only cheap cosmetic alterations to the Lynn Valley Centre. Coupled with Councils' inattention to future transit/transportation needs along the Lynn Valley Road and Mountain Highway corridors, I predict that, sooner or later, this will spell trouble for Lynn Valley.

One could go on and on with this topic. Suffice it to say that if, in the face of another 5% increase in property taxes [+/- 10% *admitted*

2-year increase, to say nothing of increased water and TransLink charges to come] the District still is finding it difficult to balance needs:available funds without dipping into its savings accounts, then taxpayers should have serious concerns.

Perhaps the most important point to be emphasized here is as follows: If, as you have indicated, property values in the District have increased to the point where your daughter, seniors and other lower-income families should no longer expect to be able to afford to live in their own communities, then something is dreadfully wrong with the way in which community decisions are being made. Since it is government which is largely responsible for planning decisions, I believe that is where the rethinking of priorities must begin.

I, for one, am not content to sit idly by while decisions are made that would effectively bar my grand-daughters from their neighbourhood and while the whole of the North Shore becomes an enclave for only the rich and the privileged.

That is not the tradition of what has made the overall community such a wonderful place to live for well over half a century.

Sincerely,
Liz James

Alan Nixon <Alan_Nixon@dnv.org> wrote:

Liz, in your email you alluded to "one District Councillor ,whom is quoted as saying,"

I believe it may be me is being misquoted. The actual text of my remarks as I have just transcribed them from the District website is as follows:

"What does exist is the inability for all people of all income realms to be able to live in the district of North Vancouver.

And that is unfortunate and that is regrettable that not everybody who chooses to can live in the District of North Vancouver. It is a market reality and we have all, in some cases, benefitted from it over the years and large number have been hurt by it but that is the reality. We sit in this desirable community with these high, high land values and regrettably not everybody can afford to live here. My own daughter had to move to Courtenay to enjoy what she liked about the District. Courtenay was the only place she could afford to buy it. So regrettably and unfortunately that is the reality - we didn't create it!"

I hope that this clarifies to an extent my remarks on the matter. Obviously a viewing of the July 28th Council meeting would give you the full range of my remarks.

I, unlike other Councillors, continue to work constructively in the background on ways to solve this mess. My best regards and warm wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Alan

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