

Subject: Council meeting July 8,2003

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

I must protest in the strongest possible terms against Acting Mayor Nixon's handling of the open Council meeting on July 8 on the subject of ARTS ASSISTANCE GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS 2003.

In the course of the presentations from various representatives of the Arts Community on the subject, there was an announced provision for members of Council to ask questions. I availed myself of this opportunity to ask, among others, the question of one of the representatives whether in his opinion the present administrative arrangement under which the Arts Community is administered by the Arts Commission, the Arts Council AND the North Vancouver Recreation Commission was administratively efficient and cost effective.

This question has been raised and continues to be raised by people with a business sense, a sense of accountability and courage in the face of a powerful bureaucracy on many occasions and for good reasons. At this point, Councillor Nixon attempted to interrupt me indicating that my question was of a political nature and was not appropriate, more or less. Apart from the fact that the term "political" in this context indicates a profound lack of understanding, it also showed poor taste. The question was perfectly appropriate.

That new members of Council have difficulties in chairing Council meetings should not come as a surprise and those of us with more experience have and are expected to show restraint and understanding. Councillor Nixon's conduct on the other hand, falls into a different category. Clearly he thought it was his job to protect the bureaucracy from such questions and throw his weight around at my expense.

These kind of meetings, among others, are geared to clarify issues. I asked the question politely, with propriety and candor. I can only assume that Councillor Nixon believes that because democratic procedures in the District of North Vancouver are violated routinely, it is safe for him to do the same - WELL IT IS NOT and I hope it will not happen again.

Ernie Crist

