

Subject: [Fwd: Re: Daycare etc]

Date: Tue, 08 Apr 2003 14:32:08 -0700

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: Re: Daycare etc

Date: Tue, 08 Apr 2003 20:49:53 +0100 (BST)

From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: John Harvey <joharv@vcn.bc.ca>

CC: Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>, Kathleen Hill <kghill@telus.net>, fonvca@fonvca.org

8 April 2003

Dear Mr. Harvey:

Many thanks for your email. I agree with you; it's preferable - and more effective - to have a single focus to a discussion. In this case, though, I believe it is the District's whole attitude to the scope of its mandate, to the leasing of District taxpayer-owned property and to the whole grants process that now has landed the District in difficulty on many fronts.

Last evening, I watched the DNV Council meeting and heard Clr. Nixon serving notice of his intention to bring a motion to the table which, if approved, might clarify and improve things somewhat.....I sure hope so. And now back to daycare....

The points you raise are good ones. Without any intention to preach the obvious, I suggest that, in the private sector, market dynamics usually take care of the success or failure of an enterprise. If a business is run efficiently, if the service is one consumers want and if the price is right, the business usually will succeed. Basically, government should set the standards and regulations, make sure the disadvantaged get the assistance they need, and then get out of the way.

In the Rec Commission example you cite, one or more of the market components must be missing if the daycare spaces cannot be filled. Wrong location, wrong product, badly run, price too high, not advertised, not required, whatever - not enough people wanted to patronize it. This, in part, makes my case. The cynic in me suggests that too often, when 'government' decides to take on that which the private sector should be doing, or can do better, one ends up with short-term, politically-expedient decisions which are based on poor or non-existent business plans, a ballooning staff top-heavy with management and little or no accountability to those who must pay the bills..

Once again, I have absolutely no problem looking after those who truly need assistance, especially the children - that's to everyone's advantage and I'm happy to contribute. My problem lies with government trying to be all things to all people instead of performing well those services which are within its respective and specific mandates.

One example on last night's BCTV news.....Protesters were seen loudly decrying the efforts of Vancouver Police to do some cleaning up on the Downtown Eastside drug scene. In the main, the police were targeting drug dealers, not citizens - not even the drug users. Reporter John Daly pointed out that many, if not most, of the dealers are not even Canadian citizens, yet 75% of them are on Canadian welfare programs.....this, even though they cause social and health-care problems which have huge associated costs. That, in a nutshell, is my beef with "universal" programs. Sometimes they help the truly needy but, far too often they are abused by those who should not be able to qualify.

Welfare, EI/UI, CPP, Pharmacare, WCB and our health-care system - not one of them is run efficiently or optimized for maximum benefit. For well over a century now, governments at all levels have proven incapable of running such programs - to such an extent that now, during economic downturn and with an aging population, we are about to pay price for our inattention and the proclivity of politicians to forego any attempt at long-term planning, in favour of taking the cream off the top today.

So, instead of looking to government to be our provider, at both the macro and micro level perhaps we'd do better to hear again the words of John F. Kennedy: Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

In closing, I agree with your implied point - we should insist that the District take a magnifying glass to all of its "traditional" policies and processes, clean house and/or update them to make them lean and mean. If that were to be done, I bet we'd find lots of money left over to help those who need the help.

Regards, and thank you again for your letter.....

Liz James

John Harvey <joharv@vcn.bc.ca> wrote:

Dear Liz, (cc's gone to Ernie and Kathleen Hill)

I have read the dialogue occurring from the e-mail sent by Kathleen Hill to Clr Crist and currently Liz without further information I fully **support** the contents of your own reply to Clr Crist (except for Deep Cove Yacht Club).

I find that the first 5 paragraphs of your e-mail reply should be the full concentration of this whole daycare issue.....

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