

Subject: Notice of Motion - North Shore Housing Symposium - Report Councillor Crist;

Date: Sun, 23 Nov 2003 10:35:17 -0800

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Notice of Motion - Report Councillor Crist:

That in response to concerns expressed by "Lionsview Seniors Planning Society" and the "Community Housing Action Committee of North Shore Community Resources" regarding affordable Housing and Housing for Seniors, the Council of the District organize a symposium on the issue of affordable Housing and Seniors Housing, including Care Facility Housing and related issues and further that the City of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver be invited to participate.

Reason for Report;

In recent correspondence sent to Mayor and Council, the Lionsview Seniors' Planning Society voiced serious concerns regarding the perceived shortage of Affordable Housing on the North Shore.

In their correspondence they have pointed to several key issues including the Need for a Policy on Retention of Rental Housing. They stated that Council has a responsibility to use the tools at its disposal to arrest the deterioration of the community's social fabric.

They continue by saying that by way of example, the Edgemont Terrace development will displace approximately 150 people including young families and other people who have been District residents for decades.

Several factors come into play on the question of "Affordable Housing" which need clarification. The definition of affordable housing according to Federal standards is that a person and or family should not have to spend more than 30% of their combined income on housing.

All housing regardless of cost is affordable to someone, needless to say. In some instances the term affordable housing has been used by developers as a catchword to build market housing when there was no shortage of such housing in the first place. This was the case in the Lynn Valley center when so called affordable housing was demanded and was built while many units remained empty for a long time because people living on the North Shore, while in need of affordable housing could not afford them.

The District has some of the lowest market housing in the Region namely on Native land. And yet there are some people, including young people living on the North Shore, who cannot afford to move into such units for lack of funds. There are people with no hope to ever save enough money to afford a down payment for even such relatively cheap housing. There also needs to be a co-coordinated strategy on housing on the North Shore.

At a recent joint meeting of North Shore Municipalities, including West Vancouver, one Councillor from West Vancouver suggested that West Vancouver is not suitable for any such housing and that it should be the responsibility of the District or the City more or less. This despite the fact that there is a shortage of seniors housing even in West Vancouver.


Also, the City of North Vancouver is engaged in a massive building program which goes far beyond the needs of North Shore residents. The City can do this since they provide neither the necessary recreation facilities nor the playing fields or parks to maintain North Shore Livability since many of these amenities are provided by the District free of charge, more or less.

To overcome this dilemma, Councillor Crist on several occasions submitted resolutions calling for a non profit housing program based on leasing 5 % of the District's annual land sales to non profit and/or co-op housing societies. This is a form of housing which will not require a substantial amount of down payment while payments are based on income. This makes it truly affordable. Such housing depends on an initial financial outlay from the Federal Government.

The new Prime Minister has indicated that Federal Funds for such housing will be made available by his administration. In any case, all such funds will be repaid to the government along with interest over the lifespan of such housing. The same is true for the leased land component provided by the municipality. Since such units are self owned pride of ownership comes into play. However, not only was there no support from Council but motions to that effect, for lack of a seconder, were not even allowed to be explained by the mover not to mention debated. Neither was there any support from any of the North Shore based organizations concerned about affordable housing.

However, the time may have come to address this issue once again via a comprehensive symposium in which the City as well as West Vancouver is asked to participate.

cc Lionsview Senior' Housing Planning Society
North Shore Community Resources

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