

Subject: Re: 2005 Capital Funding Priorities - Lynn Valley.

Date: Fri, 13 Aug 2004 21:45:17 +0100 (BST)

From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

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CC: Council <council@dnv.org>, James Ridge CAO <james_ridge@dnv.org>, "FONVCA \ (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, cagebc@yahoo.com, bill_tracey@telus.net

13 August 2004

Dear Clr. Crist:

When you shine, you really shine; what an excellent letter.

One of the most important points in the whole letter needs to be emphasized and discussed. To quote: **By way of example, you state that you are horrified that the youth center, at the top of the list, is no further along than it was last year and will now cost 400,000 dollars. This is an unacceptable amount you state "for such a small addition to the recreation center and, with further delays, will soon reach the half million mark".**

In the past, when I have discussed the proposal to proceed at long last with the Lynn Valley Library and Town Centre project, I have been roundly criticized for insisting that the whole plan - including the Library - should be put to referendum. The argument used has been that "An amount of \$6 million for the Library has already been approved by referendum in 1996; it doesn't need to go to another vote."

It was further argued that, if another referendum is held, it will be defeated and LV will end up with BOSA-dominated, multi-family, high-rises adjacent to a run-of-the-mill shopping mall and parking lot.

"Lynn Valley has waited far too long already, let's get on with it," has been the cry. Mrs. Bragg, for whom I have a great deal of respect and affection, has been of that opinion.

However, the reasoning behind the above quote clearly supports my own position that the 1996 approval to spend \$6 million on a new Library building is not only stale in 2004, it has been compromised by the fact that \$3.5 million of that money has been expended on land purchase. [See my previous email complaint under the Charter to Ms. Anita Tai.]

Before I continue, I would like to emphasize that I have a great deal of sympathy for both the position and the fears of those who would defend the projects.....but I cannot agree that the projects mirror the wishes of the community as expressed in the OCP guidelines, opinions in more recent discussions.

In past communications you have suggested that, if we don't get going on the Library, we run the risk of having high-rise towers foisted on the community; you may well be correct. What the people of Lynn Valley must understand, however, is that if they don't want the high-rises or other aspects of what seems to be evolving, then it is their responsibility to attend and say so. In the same manner that the citizens of Edgemont and of Seymour stood up for what they will and will not accept in their neighbourhoods, so must the people of Lynn Valley....and they must demand of Council that they be given a referendum on the issue - not merely an unworkable counter-petition.

Next, I would share your concerns, if it is the case that some members of the LVCA have - according to your email - taken positions on the projects which have not necessarily been ratified by full public meetings of the general membership.

I MUST STRESS THAT I HAVE SOME SYMPATHY FOR THE LVCA EXECUTIVE WHO HAVE WORKED HARD TO MOVE THE PROJECTS FORWARD, IN ORDER TO GAIN LONG-OVERDUE BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY. It has been like pulling teeth, I imagine, to get people to turn out consistently in any numbers to support the work they are doing. That said, short-circuiting the process - if that has occurred - is not the answer.

BREAKING NEWS: I have, just this minute, received a telephone call from a lady calling on behalf of the LVCA. This is exactly what she said, repeated at my request: "Hello. I am calling on behalf of the LV Community Association, to let you know that there is to be a Public Hearing on the Library and Town Centre projects. It is to be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 31st in the District Hall. It is really important for you to attend, as there has been some criticism of the projects and it is feared this may sway public opinion against the projects."

Apart from the fact that I had thought this was to be a meeting rather than the more legal "hearing," I was concerned about the content of the call.....particularly in view of the concerns you have expressed....

After having the message repeated, I suggested to the lady that it would be more appropriate for her to convey only the date, time, place and subject and that members of the phoning committee should make no further comment, one way or another, as to the position that should be taken by the person being called. This would be particularly important if the event is, indeed, to be a "Public Hearing." In brief, this should have been a call to convey information, not a call to express a quasi-political point of view.

The caller replied, "Oh, this is just the message the Committee asked me to give."

Of course, this call raises yet another point: Why is the meeting/hearing being scheduled for August 31st, when many people will be having their "last kick" at a summer holiday, tacked on to the Labour Day weekend? Even bearing in mind the upcoming byelection, if one really wants a good attendance, one would have thought that September 8, 9, or 10 would have been more suitable.

As you are aware by now, I and others have called some of the financial aspects of the LV Library/Town Centre into question. Staff will need time to sort this all out, so they can put everything before the people who will be in attendance.

NONE of this means that I am against improvements to Lynn Valley; it is just a call for accurate information and an impeccable due process. The people of Lynn Valley would be equally concerned, were this project were being proposed, in this manner, for another area of the District, rather than in their own back yard.

To those who are reluctant to go to the people on the questions, I would say this: I believe you do your neighbours elsewhere in the District a disservice, if you truly believe they will vote against Lynn Valley projects just because the facilities will not be in their own community and I ask simply, is that what you would do - for example, in Capilano, Seymour, Edgemont or Canyon Heights? I don't think so.

In summary, all of the taxpayers who will have to pay the bills are entitled to have a say. The scope of the project[s] has/have changed drastically since the 1996 referendum, as has the value of the dollar and the economics of the situation - to say nothing of the make-up of the Lynn Valley and District populations. Delta Council recently voted to resubmit a project to the people that was only 2+ years past referendum - because it was "stale" and because the financial picture had changed in the interim. The LV projects are 8 years old!

Lastly, Clr. Crist, the District of Maple Ridge is just now emerging from the fallout from a Town Core project that was implemented with appropriate due process. The resulting project is far less than it could have been and suffers an expensive taint from the court case that was successfully brought against that Council.

The subsequent advice from Mr. Young - of Lidstone, Young Anderson? Yes, the [multi-thousand-dollar] case resulted in decision against the project but it is suggested to Council that "the buildings are up and occupied so there's not much that can be done at this stage. You can't pull it all down." So much for protection of the taxpayer.

Let's do something right for a change.....and change the date of the meeting.

Once again, thank you for your excellent letter.....

Liz James

Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org> wrote:

An open letter to Maureen Bragg, President, Lynn Valley Community Association.

Dear Mrs. Bragg:

Thank you for your letter of July 29th addressed to Mayor and Council dealing with "Capital Funding Priorities 2005".

According to your correspondence, the Association invited and met with Mr. Phil Chapman from the District Planning Department at their executive meeting on July 14th, 2004 to discuss the 2005 Capital Funding priorities. According to the letter, you are concerned that they are in the same order as last year. By way of example, you state that you are horrified that the youth center, at the top of the list, is no further along than it was last year and will now cost 400,000 dollars. This is an unacceptable amount you state "for such a small addition to the recreation center and, with further delays, will soon reach the half million mark".

I certainly concur with your concerns. I would suggest, however, that to give emphasis to your requests you may follow the example of the Edgemont Community Association and invite members of Council to your meetings to acquaint them first hand with the aims and concerns of your organization. It is Council which will make the budgetary decisions. I find Council's stinginess curious to say the very least especially in light of the densification of the Lynn Valley Core

that has already taken place, including the associated increased crime rate. I also note that the proposed Lynn Valley Library, far from having a sizable cultural and community dimension, is once again being talked about as being "unnecessarily large" and may end up as being nothing more than a place to pick up and drop off books - a concept that is as outdated as the horse and buggy.

However, I noticed that while the Lynn Valley Community Association is inviting a stream of speakers to its meetings, which certainly adds to the informative aspect of such meetings, the majority of these speakers appear to represent pro developer interests and advocates of densification of the Lynn Valley Core. Some District staff now openly go around talking about yet another densification of the Lynn Valley Core including high-rises. They appear to be encouraged by expressions of sympathy by some members of the executive of the Lynn Valley Community Association for such a concept.

As a member of the Lynn Valley Community Association I have several serious concerns. The densification of the Lynn Valley Core has already taken place, albeit the people of Lynn Valley have not profited from this so far. Neither will they, unless there are going to be radical changes in planning philosophy. To put it bluntly, none of the benefits promised in the Lynn Valley Community Plan have materialized. With the exception of the Molly Nye House, which was donated by a private citizen more or less, there are no amenities.

Far from deriving any financial benefit, we have a deficit of over \$ 2 million for the required infrastructure. We have more traffic, more pollution, more parking problems and more noise. What we do NOT have is the "pedestrian" amenities advertised when the Lynn Valley Community Plan was sold to the public, including designated bicycle lanes. To be frank, the developers came, they filled their pockets and left while the people are left to pay the bill. Mixed in with this "snake oil sale" was the perennial "affordable housing" cry which always turns out to be a hoax, at least for those who need truly affordable housing.

I was horrified to read in the minutes of the Citizens Finance & Budget Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday, June 22, 2004 under "Strategic Plan" the following. "What is the future of the DNV - what type of housing will be required? "Central to the Strategic Plan is the fact that the DNV is not a homogeneous but rather a coalition of very distinct neighborhoods". " For example, Edgemont Village and Lynn Valley are diametrically opposed - LYNN VALLEY IS WILLING TO ACCEPT HIGH DENSITY WHEREAS EDMONTON IS NOT".

I have several serious questions. On whose authority was the statement made that Lynn Valley is willing to accept "high density"? Did the Lynn Valley Community Association, either direct or indirectly, convey this to District staff and if so, was this resolved at a public meeting of the Association? Have the people of Lynn Valley been asked whether they are willing to accept even more pollution, more traffic, and more noise or who exactly has decided on such a course?

However, what is far more serious for the future of Lynn Valley is the following. Planning in the District is based on neighborhood needs not on the needs of developers or some other foreign special interests. The concept of community driven development based on neighborhood needs, as we have pointed out time and time again, is not "nimbism" but is based on the social, cultural and physical needs of the people in Lynn Valley. It is based on the concept of modern sustainable community planning rather than on the often destructive, socially irresponsible and profit hungry concept of developers and real estate interests. Community driven development is sustainable development based on human need rather than the artificially imposed special interests, under whatever guise.

I believe that the Lynn Valley Community Association needs to air these questions. There are some additional questions? Is the Association in favor of increasing the parking capacity of the Mall from the present 700 parking stalls to 2000 as planned, thus making it a truly a regional car mall? Should the traffic patterns in and around the Mall, which are an invitation for accidents, not be radically changed for right hand entry and exit only? What about the open green spaces shown on the glossy brochures when the original "Pedestrian Oriented Community Plan" was sold to the people of Lynn Valley?

Judging by the letter of the Association pertaining to the upcoming District 2005 budget and the concerns expressed about the lack of action by Council, despite the increased density which has already taken place, such a review is long overdue. In the meantime I request to be given an opportunity at a Lynn Valley Community Association meeting to present my views. I do so both as an elected representative of the people of the District, including Lynn Valley, as well as a member of the Association.

Thank you for your anticipated reply.

Yours truly

Ernie Crist

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