Subject: Democracy District of North Vancouver Style
   Date: Mon, 22 Mar 2004 13:07:53 -0800
   From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>
     To: "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>
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 A PRESS RELEASE FROM ERNIE CRIST.

An attack by North Van District Council against basic and fundamental public interest, including a Councillor's right to communicate freely with his constituents, has further escalated, according to Councillor Ernie Crist, the Senior Councillor in the District of North Vancouver. This includes the right of a Councillor to criticize his own Council and bureaucratic mismanagement.

Crist, who has served on District Council close to 24 years, sharply condemned a new communications procedure policy for starting District computer systems which became effective today.

According to Jeanine Bratina, the District Information Officer, a new procedure became effective, Monday, Mar. 22, 2004. But, according to Crist, the new "shameful" District policy serves no purpose other than to muzzle criticism. It states that "effective today the following message will appear onscreen when you boot up any District computer"..

It further states "You are now utilizing technology services provided by the District of North Vancouver. Please be reminded that you are required to use these services in an appropriate manner in accordance with the District's Information Technology Usage Policy" (4-1345-2)".

"You will be required to click, I agree with, before proceeding". Crist claims that the policy is directed against him and that the new policy is inappropriate since the computer does not belong to District Council nor to the "District bureaucracy but to the people of the 'District who have paid for it and have done so exclusively so that their elected Councillors may communicate with the electors freely and without fear of being harassed or intimidated by special interests or by bureaucrats. This, said Crist, includes the right to expose and criticize Council if, in anybody's opinion, it is contrary to the public interest. Our whole system of democratic government depends on the free flow of information and freedom to criticize if necessary. As holders of public office we are already bound by legal and ethical bounds said Crist.

Crist who has been a frequent critic of Council policies, claims he is the real target of this muzzling and intimidation policy. But according to him it is ultimately directed against the public itself. Crist played a key role in insuring that the public became aware of the "Northlands" the "Canlan" and the "KPMG" as well as the District Heritage and Infrastructure Reserve Fund scandals which have plagued the District over the last few years and which, Crist claimed, were the direct result of incompetence, mismanagement and lack of leadership.

Crist said that the latest policy is merely a continuation of the old policy of attempting to sweep such matters under the rug and to discourage public exposures if and when they do occur.

The new Policy he claims is nothing but a multitude of red herrings in the guise of "improving" District business.

Crist said the real intentions are evident in point 8 and 12 of the policy stating that is illegal to "offend others"   and "Defame or compromise" the integrity of the District.

This, he said leaves the door wide open to prevent any kind of criticism since someone will inevitably be offended if the truth behind waste and incompetence is revealed. It is like putting a muzzle on the Opposition in the House of Commons, said Crist, because the Government might be offended if it is being criticized for its shortcomings by the Opposition. A most absurd situation, said Crist, and totally contrary to our system of democracy. It puts the District of North Vancouver squarely into the category of a Banana Republic, he said.

During the past few elections all member of District Council except Crist himself were endorsed by one or more special civic interest groups, said Crist.

cc community list 2,3 and 4.

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