

Subject: [Fwd: Re: FW: Thank you]

Date: Tue, 02 Mar 2004 17:43:17 -0800

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: Re: FW: Thank you

Date: Wed, 03 Mar 2004 00:52:42 +0000 (GMT)

From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>, Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>, Senior Management Committee <managecomm@dnv.org>

CC: "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

2 March 2004

Dear Clr. Crist, Ms/ Craver and Council:

It had been my intention to attend the meeting of West Vancouver Council last evening, to cover both the Sea-to-Sky and TransLink agenda items. As it transpired, I arrived home late and decided to have a peaceful supper and give everything a miss. So I turned on Shaw Cable and watched coverage of the District instead!

I really do not know what has happened to our democracy. It seems the only time people turn up to council meetings in any number, is when they wish to browbeat council and/or their neighbours into submission.

Events leading up to last night's meeting would have deterred the faint-of-heart from appearing before Council. Indeed, some of the intimidation to which Ms. Craver has been subjected might have persuaded many to call on that elusive Community Policing contingent. Although Mayor Bell managed to hold onto the reins of the meeting, it was by the barest of margins and the scarcely-hidden mob mentality was palpable even on the TV screen.

Several of those who spoke were not residents of the District. They had every right to put their case, but seemed to feel that residents of the neighbourhood under siege have no right to expect peace, order and good government in return for the hefty taxes they pay. I believe Ms. Craver when she said that many neighbours were too afraid to attend, for fear of retaliation. In another context, members of my own family have felt the same way with beer-bottle-throwing vandals....Report them and you'll get your tires slashed or worse.

"Rights" come with responsibilities - or should. You have received letters from me on this subject when it was discussed previously. I have been driven off, for example, use of the Baden Powell Trail by aggressive bikers, and that began many years ago now. I am pretty darned healthy and active but that doesn't mean I can react fast enough to avoid bikes hurtling toward me, doing one-wheel jumps over the healthkit ramps they have built.

Council was told how the bikers "have built and maintained the trails for years." As far as I'm concerned, the trails didn't need to be built and maintained; they were perfectly good as they were....and the fauna and flora no doubt feel the same!

Several presenters made their case by 'blackmail' saying that, because they spend some money in the District, Council better watch out because re-directing them to a more suitable site for their sport would mean they'll take their business elsewhere. As far as I am concerned, I'm fed up with blackmail; if they're not prepared to respect our residents and the wild environment, it would be good riddance - and, probably, a net financial benefit.

Last night, I was especially disappointed that Alison Sydor was a part of what was going on. No doubt she was well-intentioned but, perhaps, has not been subjected to the crass and abusive behaviour that has been experienced at the top of the hills. I believe Ms. Sydor was being used.

Much has been made of "damage" done by dogs on trails. Well I can tell you that the ripping up of trails at the top of the hills has done a great deal more damage than most dogs I've known, especially now that most dog owners pick up after their pets. Any of the dogs I've had have 'trodden lightly on this earth' and left little mark were it not for memories of their love and loyal companionship.

Previously, I was able to take a book and a dog up to the Baden Powell, hike some, read some, listen to the birds and see the odd bear. Some days, I 'jest sat' in the sunshine. And then came more and more of the hawking, spitting, hurtling bikers and that was the end of that peace and quiet. No, not all mountain bikers are like that but there sure are enough bad ones to ruin it for others in their sport and residents alike.

One of the things I found most surprising in last night's discussion, was that Clt. Harris - that defender of trees, birds, bears and all things riparian - was scarcely to be heard and certainly not in support of Ms. Craver.

All in all, it bothered me a great deal that this resident was virtually left to fend for herself in this matter - even though most members of Council will have heard previous presentations from many more than she on the subject.

Moreover, Clr. Crist's motion had been seriously, probably deliberately, mis-characterized. But the bikers didn't want to be confused by the facts. Their convenience was being threatened, so to heck with the truth. Clr. Crist has never, to my knowledge, asked for mountain biking to be banned from "the Shore" [I dislike that term almost as much as "the Heartland," and for the same reason].

What Clr. Crist - and the neighbourhood - did ask for, is that GVRD, ASAP, actively seek out out a more appropriate location for the sport. Most residents, had they as much intestinal fortitude as Ms. Craver, would applaud the suggestion.

Last but not least, why should the mountain-biking community expect taxpayers to foot the bill for trail repair, toilets, by-laws and enforcement because some of them don't know any better than to abuse private property, moon local residents and defecate out in the open? Some members of Council stressed they had never seen any misbehaviour. Well, perhaps the residents should place markers on the 'items' left behind and take a few, well-focused photographs for District files.

Oh? That would violate people's rights? Well, tough.

Ms. Craver, I apologise for not being there last night to offer at least some moral support....and thank you for your spunk.

Sincerely,
Liz James
[604] 988-2066

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