

Subject: [Fwd: A liability by any other name - here come more legal bills]

Date: Thu, 20 May 2004 17:40:19 -0700

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: A liability by any other name - here come more legal bills

Date: Fri, 21 May 2004 00:42:00 +0100 (BST)

From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: fonvca@fonvca.org

20 May 2004

Dear Editor:

District of North Vancouver Council attitudes to finance and to its governing legislation boggle the mind: *Taxpayers will not have a say*, Don Fiorvento, Outlook 20 May.

Having scraped through his previous Council's illegal actions on the Canlan Ice Sports agreement - ably assisted by some helpful BC Liberals - the District's doughty Mayor is headed for more trouble on the Lynn Valley Library and Town Centre projects. Why trouble? Because, as Fiorvento describes, the governing legislation - Community Charter - requires a counter-petition or referendum to be held, if a liability on taxpayers is to extend beyond a period of five years. Further, not only was the \$6 million OK'd under the 1996 referendum for a different Library project than is planned today, much of today's population wasn't even around here then.

District taxpayers will be happy to know that their Mayor believes that if Council takes an amount of \$15.1 million out of the much-challenged Heritage Fund, it won't be committing them to a liability. Hello? Anyone remember that the very profitable Northlands Golf Course was to repay the Heritage Fund? Anyone remember Clr. Harris asking, "If we borrow our own money from the Heritage Fund, it won't cost us anything, right?"

Has no-one heard what happens to non-liabilities if projects go way over budget - like District Hall renovations, or the landfill closure, for example? Or in the event whatever goes into the Town Centre project suddenly discovers it cannot turn enough profit to repay the money?

Mayor Bell, that \$15.1 million dollars belongs to *all* of the people of the District. If the money is taken out of the Heritage Fund, it is a liability until every last penny has been repaid - plus interest. But one supposes you hope to be contributing your neo-finance ideas to Ottawa by then - not to worry what you've left in your wake.

In answer to Clr. Crist's point - what Bosa does can, or should be controlled by District zoning and by-laws. That has nothing to do with the legality of the Charter with respect to committing taxpayers to multi-million-dollar liabilities. If the people don't want five high-rise towers and do want a library, they'll let Council - and Bosa - know, via public hearings and via the referendum to which the Charter entitles them.

Sincerely,
Liz James
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