

Subject: Marine Drive Improvement Committee

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From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

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CC: FONVCA <fonvca@fonvca.org>, "Cathy Adams" <cathyadams@canada.com>

Mayor & Council:

As a member of the Marine Drive Improvement Committee, I'd like to thank councillors Muri, Mackay-Dunn, Little, Hicks, and Harris for supporting the amendment to the staff recommendation ensuring that our committee has the opportunity, following the technical work by staff, to 'sign-off' the design plan that we created over 5 years of hard work.

In spite of the above, it was more than a little disappointing to hear the comments by Councillor Nixon and to read Mr. Ridge's e-mail to Council on the same subject. I found it particularly surprising that Councillor Nixon would raise questions about the legitimacy of the committee, casting suspicions on the membership and suggesting that the committee was demanding a 'first right of refusal' on the design plan before it goes out to the public. It reminded me of similar comments he has made in the past regarding the Edgemont Community Association (on the issue of the expansion of 33 ft. lots in Upper Capilano), the Seymour Planning Committee, and even questions about the representation of community associations in Lower Capilano. But with respect to the Marine Drive Improvement Committee, one wonders why Councillor Nixon hasn't voiced his concerns years ago. Instead he chose to wait and let go of a stink bomb at the 11th hour when the discussion ought to be focused on the plan itself.

In response to the comments and concerns raised, I'd like to offer a few facts in no particular order:

- There has been no 'mandate creep' by the committee as stated by Mr. Ridge. Councillor Nixon declared on Monday that the original purpose of the committee was strictly that of a visioning exercise. Yes that was part of it, but out of that vision the committee was tasked with developing a detailed design plan for the Marine Drive corridor.
- The composition of the committee is no mystery. There are members who live in Pemberton Heights, Lions Gate, Lower Capilano, and Norgate neighbourhoods. There is also representation from the Advisory Design Panel and TPAC. My role on the committee was as a representative from the ADP when I served as a person with a disability. The other ADP reps include architect Russ Meiklejohn who lives in Pemberton Heights and property developer Thomas Meyer (who ultimately had to resign because of other volunteer commitments). If Councillor Nixon was truly unaware or suspicious of the committee's composition, why didn't he just ask the Chair, Cathy Adams, a long time ago?
- Representation by the business community has always been desired but has proven to be a challenge. To reach out, the committee engaged the business operators and commercial property owners in an open house to directly solicit their input on the draft plan, which turned out extremely positive.
- A monitoring committee is not some sort of defacto council that approves or rejects development applications. Rather, a monitoring committee simply provides developers with feedback on an application and how it fits with the design plan, and to do so at the earliest stage of the redevelopment process. It therefore it makes good sense that the monitoring committee be composed of those involved in creating the design plan because they are the people most familiar with it. The four community associations are not being bypassed in any way because they are already represented on the Marine Dr. Improvement Committee and would therefore be on the monitoring committee. Why Councillor Nixon and Mr. Ridge would apparently be suspicious of such a committee is very odd.

In closing, I don't want to turn my personal frustration over the comments of one councillor and an e-mail by Mr. Ridge into a big controversy. I am glad that I was asked to serve on the Marine Drive Improvement Committee and I am proud of the work that has been accomplished. In the end I am confident that the final design plan as presented will receive strong support by the public and the business community in the Lower Capilano area.

Sincerely,
Brian Platts