

Subject: Alpine Recreational Strategic Plan (ARSP)

Date: Thu, 23 Jun 2005 09:28:19 -0700

From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <kost@triumf.ca>

CC: "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, "James Ridge" <James_Ridge@dnv.org>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST.

The implications of the recent Council meeting, held in the District Operation Center to discuss the "Alpine Recreational Strategic Plan" (ARSP) will be as slippery for District finances as the meeting was questionable in terms of democratic process. What transpired can only happen in a Banana Republic. The meeting was chaired by the CAO and a facilitator instead of the Mayor. Who decided this I don't know. It was held, not in the Council Chambers, but well outside the view of Cameras. The public was allowed to observe, but was not permitted to either participate or even ask questions.

The ARSP has been in the works for years. As the name suggests, its purpose was to provide a long term plan for the use of the Alpine Area for outdoor recreation. The initiative was a by-product of the growing use of Mount Fromme by Mountain Bikers. Mountain Biking is another word for stunt biking and is considered to be an extreme sport which requires special protection to safeguard against environmental damage. But instead of prohibiting biking on the steep, forested, wet and ecologically sensitive slopes of this mountain until a comprehensive study was completed, the District allowed it to continue.

The upshot was that the ARSP was dictated not by rational and business-like considerations but by political expediency. The original idea was to plan first, much as you would when building a house where you think before you start building. Not so in the District, however.

Adjacent residents were the first to suffer the impact. After public demonstrations, Council implemented parking restrictions.

The second debacle followed when dangerous and illegally constructed structures had to be removed at District expense. The debacle continued when District Management presented Council with the first version of the "Alpine Strategic Plan". It was as far removed from being Strategic as the Sahara desert is from the North Pole. It was, in fact, nothing but an uncoordinated and piecemeal plan for building more trails on Mount Fromme. There was no mention of additional players such as the GVRD, which owns huge tracts of land on the North Shore, or the Provincial Government or even the private sector, which is also a player.

With this as background and after numerous delays, the revised version of the Strategic Plan was presented to Council on Tuesday June 21. However, if you look at this second wonder, it is not much better than the first one. It is neither comprehensive nor is it strategic. The worst part is that it will put the financial burden on District taxpayers alone, more or less. There is no commitment to contribute by any of the other potential players. It still centers around Mount Fromme, which is but a small portion of the huge potential North Shore Recreation Area.


Already, one Councillor suggested that the money to pay for it be taken from the Heritage Fund i.e. land sales. Already, staff told Council that, so far, close to \$ 300,000 has been spent on various related issues. I do not recall ever specifically voting for such expenditures. And already staff indicated that two parking lots to accommodate the scheme would cost close to a million dollars.

It is truly curious. District Council has no money to provide access to

the waterfront owned by the public - no money to provide adequate sidewalks and no money to accommodate bike lanes on our streets to alleviate traffic congestions - NO MONEY EVEN TO MAINTAIN THE EXISTING PARKS PROPERLY. There is no real strategic plan - only ad hoc, isolated and cockeyed pieces and a considerable enthusiasm to spend money on Mount Fromme.

None of the other players are in the picture. There was even talk of NOT bringing this item back to a regular Council meeting for any further discussion so the public can have input. It was the opinion of both Management and some members of Council that the meeting was sufficient to proceed. "There is no time to lose", said the CAO. In the meantime the bikers are continuing with their work on Mount Fromme even while the CAO said that many of the trails may have to be dismantled. If I were a mountain biker I would be royally annoyed. The Mayor did attend the meeting but was clearly not in charge. She did however enthusiastically support the so called plan. All in all it looks to me that the Alpine Recreational Strategic Plan is shaping up as yet another District fiasco.

Ernie Crist

 winmail.dat	Name: winmail.dat Type: application/ms-tnef Encoding: base64
---	---