

Subject: RE: TO STAND ON FREE SOIL AMONG A PEOPLE FREE - HOW TO RESTORE GOOD GOVERNMENT IN NORTH VAN DISTRICT THIS COMING NOVEMBER.

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

To: <fonvca@fonvca.org>

AN APPEAL TO ALL RESIDENTS IN THE DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER.

The District of North Vancouver needs a new Council - A NEW group of civic leaders capable of restoring good government. AND NOTHING LESS THAN A NEW CIVIC PARTY EXPRESSING A NEW VISION CAN DO THIS. ALL OTHER SCENARIOS ARE MERE WISHFUL THINKING AND WILL PLAY DIRECTLY INTO THE HANDS OF THE VERY PEOPLE who brought the District to the brink of disaster, BE THEY IN OR OUTSIDE THE MUNICIPAL HALL.

IT IS AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL WHERE IT IS ALL HAPPENING - CRIME, POLLUTION, TAXES, TRAFFIC, THE AIR WE BREATHE, HOUSING, JOBS, PARKS, AS WELL AS HEALTH AND RECREATION TO MENTION BUT A FEW areas. THE TASK TO MAINTAIN OUR NORTH SHORE LIVEABILITY AND PROTECT THE DISTRICT FROM FURTHER INCOMPETENCE IS DAUNTING.

On the surface this statement might appear to be exaggerated but the long list of fiascos from Canlan and Northlands to the Heritage Fund and the land slide near Riverside Drive, tell a different story. Even a casual observer will agree that a wholesale change is needed. The groundwork to continue with business as usual following the next municipal election in November is already in place. Statements to the contrary, are nothing but whitewash attempts by the incumbents and those whom they serve. The evidence speaks for itself.

District taxes, year after year, have risen far more than in any other municipality in the Lower Mainland. Residential property taxes compared to the City of North Vancouver for a similar assessed value home are now \$ 600 higher in the District. High taxes have also impacted the business community and threaten our industrial jobs. Gone too is the District Heritage Fund, more or less. This is on top of the taxes.

The same is true for the Infrastructure Reserve Fund which was \$91 million in 1997. It too is gone. Still, District Council continues to subsidise the City of North Vancouver. The City is building the high rises and the District is building the playing fields for them. Although 3 out of every 4 major recreation facilities on the North Shore are in the District, the City population is more than half that of the District, District taxpayers are paying 100% all of the capital maintenance costs of District facilities.

At the same time, for lack of funding, these same facilities are deteriorating at a rapid rate. Members of District Council, who support such policies, during elections receive the support of special interest groups, including sport groups. All efforts to change these giveaways have been ignored. Re-election of the present District Council will guarantee that this policy will continue. Statements to the contrary are like accepting the word of a fox inside a hen house that no harm will come to the chickens.

Now that District Council has raised the indemnity of its members, we can no longer shrug off poor and costly decisions because this is the best we can expect from poorly compensated Councillors and Mayor. Raising the indemnity is the first step to attract qualified people, provide respectable leadership and counter apathy and growing cynicism in government. The people of the District do not have to put up with irresponsible decisions costing not only millions of dollars but also lives. The long list of fiascos, making the District an example of poor government beset by corruption and incompetence, are not necessary.

Nothing less than a wholesale change this November will restore acceptable business standards. The idea that it will be possible to accomplish this with the present Council is a fallacy. With one exception, they have all sung the same tune. They even accused an innocent member of Council who exposed many of the shortcomings of cheating on expenses and car allowance while some of them were guilty of this misdeed themselves.

District finances are in a shambles. The underlying policies, which pushed District taxes from the second lowest in the region to the second highest inside a few years, are still in place. The District is still selling land to subsidise its operations. The implications are far reaching. Higher density, traffic congestion, noise, pollution and higher taxes will be the result.

The present Mayor is chomping at the bit to accommodate higher density. She even stated so during the last election. She calls it "infilling". Her voting record confirms the worst fears regardless of her questionable commitment to the environment. The record shows that her commitment to saving green space is indeed strong as long as it does not interfere with development.

The densification of the Lynn Valley Core is a mere example. It was supposed to be a Pedestrian Oriented Town Center but it is nothing of the sort. It is nothing more than a regional car mall. The plans call for even more cars. In violation of the costly neighbourhood and community planning process, monster houses are again approved throughout the District. It goes under the name of Development Variances. The Neighbourhood and Community Planning process which has cost the District millions of dollars is being undermined. That more development will result in lower taxes is a myth. The opposite is true. It is the economic and fiscal policies, including taxes, which will determine North Shore liveability, not solemn declarations of second string politicians.


This present Council is not truly committed to prevent the District from becoming another West End. It takes more than lip service to prevent this from happening. To change direction, the District will have to stop its dependence on land sales to cover operational expenses. So far despite solemn declarations to the contrary they have refused to do so. They used the proceeds for a slush fund more or less. This is on top of money from land leases and reserve funds which have also been used up. Recent statistics prove that the District of North Vancouver is the only municipality in the Lower Mainland without Infrastructure Reserve Funds to speak of. Proposals to find alternative solutions, such as stopping subsidising the City of North Vancouver, have been ignored.

With one exception, not a single member of the present Council stood up to expose Northlands, Canlan, and the Lynn Valley Pedestrian Oriented Town Center hoax. Some Council members even cheated on their expense account and their car allowance. That the amount was pitiful is not the issue. The issue is that people who have no respect for taxpayers dollars cannot be trusted. They are not the kind of people needed to lead the District into a new era and engender trust in government.

At stake is the integrity of local government and our North Shore liveability, this is another way of saying the stakes are exceedingly high - how high was spelled out in the introduction of the District Community Plan by veteran Councillor Ernie Crist. Only a new civic party firmly rooted in true community values, can make truly meaningful changes. No single individual by himself will be able to wrest control away from those who now dictate District affairs. This is regardless of good intentions.

All present Council members, with the exception of one were

endorsed by a special interest civic party. This includes the Mayor. They received support from this special interest group on the promise to prevent the public from accessing the foreshore land even though it belongs to the public. Keeping this in mind, it is imperative not to fall for the usual gimmicks and fear mongering tactics dished out during election time by these special interest groups. The formation of a civic party representing not the interests of a minority but of the interests the District taxpayers at large is imperative.

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