

**Subject: RE: FW: Council Meeting 21 March 2005**

**Date:** Tue, 22 Mar 2005 18:34:35 -0800

**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>

**To:** <cathyadams@canada.com>

**CC:** <cagebc@yahoo.com>, <fonvca@fonvca.org>, "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, <bplatts@shaw.ca>, <kost@triumf.ca>, "James Ridge" <James\_Ridge@dnv.org>, <nsart@telus.net>, "James Ridge" <James\_Ridge@dnv.org>, <Council@cnv.org>, <nvarscouncil@telus.net>, <nsarts@telus.net>, <seymourartgallery@shawcable.com>

Hello Cathy:

I was NOT critical of you nor was I supportive of the paintings or the artist. As I said, I know nothing about them and I hope I made this clear. I was concerned that a demand was made to remove the paintings without giving a reason. At that time I was unaware of the reasons as I have now been given to understand.

The point I made right from the beginning is that this Hall belongs to the people of the District and if they have certain standards, and this or any other painting or piece of art does not meet those standards they have every right to ask for their removal. I just wanted to know what those standards are. That is all.

I still think that my proposal to set up a committee of sorts to establish certain criteria would be helpful, not only for the audience, but also for the artists themselves. It would also help me so that I know how to explain the policy to others, including people from the artistic community. Indeed if that is what the community wants I would be more than willing to provide some ideas.

I do know how to separate "art" which depicts the ugly, the perverse, the cruel, the violent, the absurd and that which glorifies our moribund and decadent society from the positive, the beautiful and the uplifting. As I said "ART" is a tool which ALWAYS serves a purpose. It can be a powerful tool in the hands of the public to fight corporate greed, decadence and destruction. There is no such thing as Art for Art's sake despite platitudes to the contrary.

Cheers,

Ernie

-----Original Message-----

From: cathyadams@canada.com [<mailto:cathyadams@canada.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2005 3:49 PM

To: Ernie Crist

Cc: cagebc@yahoo.com; fonvca@fonvca.org; Mayor and Council - DNV; Senior Management Committee; bplatts@shaw.ca; kost@triumf.ca; James Ridge

Subject: RE: FW: Council Meeting 21 March 2005

Dear Ernie

Prior to criticizing me on this issue, I would have preferred if you had written or phoned me to find out more about my concerns, if you are wondering.

I truly thought I had been clear as to my reasons for objecting. I will forward to any of you not originally copied on a follow-up email I sent to Mr. McPherson, Acting CAO, this morning, in which I was very specific, giving explicit examples of what aspects of these materials are objectionable.

I also ask that you respect my role as a parent on this issue. It's fine for adults to say they can just look the other way, and not get involved, but for someone such as myself with a young child, I ask that these vulnerable citizens be respected in the dialogue. Surely I should be secure to bring a child into District Hall without concerns for what we might come across.

And Liz - to be clear - only three paintings were taken down yesterday. The rest remain. It is the remaining ones I discuss in the email I'll forward. Mr. Ridge, in his response last Friday morning, told me he was also concerned, and would ask the arts council to remove them.

Cathy

On Tue, 22 Mar 2005 14:50:29 -0800, "Ernie Crist" wrote:

Dear Ms James:

I passed no judgment on the "ART" in question - I am not defending it. In fact I have not even looked at it except in passing.  
What I am saying is that before people start removing paintings they better have a reason and state those reasons. Even Nikita Khrushchev the erstwhile Premier of the Soviet Union stated the reason why modern Art promoted by the CIA should be removed from a display in Moscow many years ago. His reason, Art is that which extols the virtues of world peace and the achievements of the working people. The CIA paintings on the other hand he said glorified war, brutality, violence, the ugly and the perverse,  
he said. At least he gave a reason. If, as you say this particular "Art" denigrates women, than it should be stated and the reason why this is so.

What is more important, there should be a policy in place as to what is acceptable and what is not in the opinion of the "ART experts" so that the artists, so called, know what the rules are when it comes to hanging paintings in the District HALL. For all I know the Artist may have had THE EXACT OPPOSITE IN MIND rather than defend the brutalization of women or something to that effect, as I am now told. Maybe the artist should have had an opportunity to explain what this is all about.

When Picasso painted his famous Guernica he was soundly criticized for making people look like animals when, in reality, he stated nothing of the sort. I have no idea what this is all about. What I do know is that it is dangerous to play art jury and judge without stating what the criteria are. Art always serves a purpose. It is a tool like music or any other form of art.

I have suggested that FONVCA form an expert panel and review any and all paintings before they are being displayed in the Hall. Maybe it could call on persons who also proved to be experts on defending the democratic rights of elected officials.

Indeed,  
maybe Don Bell and Murray Dyckeman should be asked to sit on such a panel. I think Councillor McKeon-Holmes would also make a valuable addition.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist

From: Elizabeth James [<mailto:cagebc@yahoo.com>]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2005 11:48 AM To: Ernie Crist; fonvca@fonvca.org; Mayor and Council - DNV; Senior Management Committee; Brian Platts; Cathy Adams; Corrie Kost Subject: Re: FW: Council Meeting 21 March 2005

22 March 2005

Dear Clr. Crist:

I'm sorry, but I do not agree with your point on "art." As with the right to free speech, there is a place and a time for everything.

Over the years, I have had ample evidence that I can trust the reasonable opinions of both Cathy Adams and Brian Platts. From the concerns they expressed in their emails, it sounds to me that District Hall is not the appropriate place to display the "art" in question. Most important of all, given all of the efforts currently underway to discourage violence against women, now is certainly not the time to present what I'm told is the subject matter.

If the material has merit, the artist should have no problem persuading a public or a private gallery to display it. In such a place, those who wish to view it can choose to do so, whereas a visitor to the Hall on other business has little option but to see it.

I applaud the quick action taken by Staff to remove it.

Sincerely,  
Liz James

Ernie Crist <ernie\_crist@dnv.org> wrote:

From: Ernie Crist Sent: Tuesday,  
March 22, 2005 9:59 AM To: Subject: RE: Council Meeting  
21 March 2005

Dear Mr. ....

It was good to see you at last night's  
Council meeting and thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts.

You are bang on - Council DOES have the authority to ask residents  
whether they have a secondary suite and following this action the municipality  
DOES have the right to verify should the question be negative and/or  
is being ignored. However, the Council in my opinion does not have  
the will to do so. That is the crux of the issue. All other statements are in  
my opinion excuses and you know what the philosopher said about excuses.  
With an election coming up and with 6000 illegal suites (not 2500 as you  
were told) they are scared to do something serious. I already said so in public and even though

I said it loud and more than once, it appears nobody heard me. I also  
have another problem. Why should people who have no objection to their taxes  
being used to subsidise the City and who don't say boo when they could  
save millions by reorganizing the Rec Commission, object to someone  
getting away with a freebie.

But to go back to the Secondary Suite  
issue. Nobody wants to understand that in a case like that the onus to prove  
that home owners do NOT have a secondary suite is NOT on the  
municipality but on the homeowner. It would be different were the  
municipality to go from door to door DEMANDING access to verify  
without asking politely first. The initial question is the key to the  
legality. Your analogy with the drivers licence is a good one. A  
policeman has the right to ask me at any time whether I have a  
firearm in my car. If I say no, he has the right to search my car  
without giving any reasons as to why he believes that I  
have.

The municipality too has the right to ask  
whether a person has a secondary suite. At the moment, when a person makes a statement that they  
do NOT, the municipality has the power to verify. With the action of denying  
it or refusing to answer, the legal weight has shifted in favour of the  
municipality. It is as simple as that. What people, who argue law and  
human rights forget, is that the fundamental premise of this issue is that the  
municipality HAS THE RIGHT to demand payment. The letter sent to  
the owners can easily be written in a fashion so as NOT to create any legal problem and  
still achieve the objective.

The handling of the Tsleil Waututh issue  
last night was not wrong since it was listed on the agenda as a  
deferral. Corrie, is therefore, wrong on this one.

However, I do agree that it  
might have been better to clarify this for the benefit of the public.

As far as the ART in the Hall is  
concerned, if Cathy Adams or anybody else objects to a painting then  
he/she should give a specific reason. To simply object because

she (or others) find it objectionable is not good enough in my opinion. We are talking about ART (trash as it may be in the opinion of some). I suggest FONVCA set up a Citizens Exhibition Approval Committee with stated criteria to guide them. Since the Hall belongs to the citizens they have every right to determine what may or may not be exhibited. Otherwise the objection carries little weight.

If they want me to make a motion to that effect I'd be more than happy to do that. However, I don't think Mrs Adams was nearly as upset over this issue as I was over the fact that 90.000 people ( with the exception of a few) stood idly by and allowed one of their elected representatives to be harassed on unproven charges. Now that was something to get upset about, but there was silence - if I did not know already how the Jews felt in Nazi Germany, I surely would know now. Needless to say being a student of Homo Sapiens - no surprises there.

As far as the Port Security issue is concerned, I think that Councillor Walton missed the relevant point which is that, unless the Port accepts full responsibility including paying in full, we ARE involved.

As far as the transportation announcement is concerned, why would the Premier inform a level of government that does not exist under the constitution? I am being sarcastic of course. I have never seen anybody having a hernia over the fact that we do not exist but 150 Natives under the constitution do. This, after all, is Canada. But I am certainly not blaming the Natives. I rest my case.

Yours  
truly,

Ernie Crist

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