

Subject: FW: FW: Proposed 2005 Property Tax

Date: Tue, 29 Mar 2005 07:44:31 -0800

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

To: <wrtracey@telus.net>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>, "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "James Ridge" <James_Ridge@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>

CORRECTION :

I have just been informed by our CAO James Ridge, that the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee IS meeting regularly and is in fact meeting tonight.

My apologies - I had been told previously by a member of this committee that they had not met for a long time thus my comments - my apologies.

Ernie Crist

From: Ernie Crist
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2005 12:09 AM
To: 'wrtracey@telus.net'
Cc: fonvca@fonvca.org; Cagebc@yahoo.com; Mayor and Council - DNV; James Ridge; Senior Management Committee
Subject: RE: FW: Proposed 2005 Property Tax

Hello Bill and thank you for your comments. The Citizens Budget Committee has to all intents and purposes been disbanded.

We recognise that our new CAO has his own style and I am more interested in results and will not say very much on the style issue.

However, I do agree that there are big issues which should be addressed but are not because they are highly political by that I mean that are highly political and are taboo more or less. One, as I have mentioned is the Recreation Commission issue, another is the Arts Administration which is scandalously inefficient but other than use every opportunity to say so I cannot do anymore. Yet another is the DVP issue which is a costly and quite frankly subversive activity. It reflects the relationship of forces on Council and no matter how many times I say it, nothing will be done while allowing it to continue will have serious consequences in the long run. It is undermining the whole concept of community planning and neighbourhood participation.

There is also the transportation and the GVRD Governance issue which should be elevated to a much higher level of political leadership but cannot for the same reasons. The political will does not exist. Yet another one is the Mountain Biking issue - this is rather typical since if we had done what we said we would right from the beginning which is to ready a truly strategic study instead of producing a half cooked and politically opportunistic report we would not have ended up with the costly debacle we did. There are other issues including the waterfront and the neighbourhood policing issue which fall into the same category.

This is why other municipalities and cities have civic parties. They are needed first to write a platform, two, to then elect the people who subscribe to it and three who will act accordingly during the term of Council. The bottom line is that politics determines everything and the District its no exception and unless and until the people in the District recognise this and act accordingly they will continue to be disappointed. To reiterate you need a civic party much as you might dislike the idea or the issues you want to be addressed will simply not be addressed.

Cheers, Ernie

From: Bill Tracey [<mailto:wrtracey@telus.net>]
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2005 9:27 PM
To: Ernie Crist
Cc: fonvca@fonvca.org; Cagebc@yahoo.com; Mayor and Council - DNV; James Ridge; Senior Management Committee
Subject: Re: FW: Proposed 2005 Property Tax

Ernie,

Not all the public is as apathetic as you say.

For some, we are prepared to pay higher taxes to get more (or better - not likely) services. For others, the silence comes from simple frustration -- huge amounts of council time are spent in discussing issues that ought to be a "slam dunk" for a decision, while other issues that ought to receive serious discussion are simply glossed over or it is made clear that our opinions really don't matter. In many cases the cost in public time is just too large relative to the amounts of tax increase that are involved, so we make choices about how we spend our time and effort.

Council should not themselves be lulled into thinking the public doesn't care, however. It's not how much we pay in taxes that matters for most of us -- it's what we get (how that money is spent) that matters, and if we find we're not getting VALUE for our taxes council will find out about it at the polls.

What ever happened to the Citizens' Budget and Finance Committee? I don't recall them being involved at all in this year's budget.

Regards,
Bill

Ernie Crist wrote:

From: Ernie Crist
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2005 6:41 PM
To: 'sue cope'
Subject: RE: Proposed 2005 Property Tax

Dear Ms Cope:

The projected tax increase for 05/06 is currently in the neighbourhood of 4.16% but could go higher. The Budget process is not quite completed. The TX rate for individual tax categories will be set following the approval of the budget. At that time Council will, as always, face the perennial dilemma of having to decide whether we will apply the tax increase uniformly or whether we will favour one category over another which means that the other categories will pay even more than the projected average.

The real issue and the one which this community has consistently ignored is that the District has gone from the second lowest taxes in the region to the second highest in the span of 12 years. During that same time, the District has "mismanaged" or "used" up 500 Million Dollars of it's Heritage Fund which includes land sales, land lease monies and interest generated by this fund. In addition the District

has since 1997 liquidated \$ 91 million from its Infrastructure Reserve Fund. All this has been pointed out to the community via TV, via ads paid from my own pocket, through letters to the editor and news reports.

This community was silent and has paid less attention to these issues then it has to the proverbial flea plague in Somalia.

What might also be of interest to you is that the District is subsidising the City via the existing Recreation Aagreement under which the City is building the high-rises and the District is providing the playing fields. The District has 3 out of every 4 Recreation facilities on the North Shore but with the City, having more than 50% of the population of the District, not contributing a single penny to the capital maintenance of those facilities. This constitutes another form of subsidy.

I have brought this issue also to the attention of the public but it has resulted in a yawn at best. Also the District could save \$ millions each and every year by simply reorganising the Recreation Commission based on the Parkgate model. This could be done without sacrificing the level of services. This too has been brought to the attention of the public a hundred times but without causing as much as a murmur.

The point I am making is that the real challenge is for the public to force District Council to address these issues rather than try trying to shift the burden from one tax category to another as you are suggesting. The matter is especially sensitive since, unlike single family residential properties whose owners may not write off taxes as a cost of doing business the owners of commercial and industrial properties may do so.

Another factor to be considered is that whereas residential properties are set at market, more or less, which is influenced by the most recent sales of such properties, industrial properties are assessed at far below their actual replacement value. I mention this, since judging by the much larger TX rates for both industrial and commercial properties, one could come to the conclusion that they are paying up to ten times as much as are single family residential. But this is not so. As I stated already they are assessed at far below market although this does not apply to commercial properties as much as it does to industrial properties.

Notwithstanding, we will carefully review the tax rates. All meetings are advertised in the local press and in the District Dialogue. Any member of the public has an opportunity to address Council. This even applies to regular Council meetings each and every Monday.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist.

From: sue cope [<mailto:suecope@progressiveenterprisesltd.com>]
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2005 12:33 PM
To: DNVCouncil
Subject: Proposed 2005 Property Tax

Dear Mayor & Council,

We are the owners of 28 strata units located in the 1300 block Welch Street. Like many other commercial property owners in the District, we are facing huge property value increases, and were unsuccessful in our hearing with BC Assessment.

The reason for my email is to find out what the Districts plans are for the mill rate for 2005 and will there be any public input into the process. The property assessments for our complex on average have increased 41%; and even if the mill rate were to remain the same (2004 - 2005) using the 2005 BC Assessment values, small businesses would have little chance of survival on the North Shore.

I think it would be unconscionable for the District to allow an increase in the mill rate that would result in putting small businesses in jeopardy. The District has been a proponent of the small "mom & pop" shops and when it comes time to formulate the 2005 property tax I sincerely hope you keep this in mind.

If there is someone with whom I can discuss this I would appreciate getting in touch.

Thank you,

Sue Cope

President

Progressive Enterprises Ltd.,

604-985-3908

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