

Subject: [Fwd: Re: Tonight Council Meeting]

Date: Sun, 22 May 2005 19:08:09 -0700

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: RE: Tonight Council Meeting

Date: Mon, 16 May 2005 11:47:02 -0700

From: Eric Pettit <eric@openspacearchitecture.com>

To: council@dnv.org

CC: fonvca@fonvca.org

This letter is in regards to the following request.

“Alpine Area Strategic Recreation Study”

File 13.6480.20/010.001

Tracking Number 2002-01306

Submitted by Councillor Ernie Crist

WHEREAS District Council, as early as 2003, committed to produce an *Alpine Area Strategic Recreation Study* to be presented to Council by no later than the Summer and later the Fall of 2004;

AND WHEREAS this *Study*, when finally presented to Council, was referred back to staff for further elaboration and direction;

AND WHEREAS subsequently, the new deadline for completion of such a study was set for early 2005 and has not yet materialized;

AND WHEREAS in the meantime, extreme biking on Mount Fromme, which is a bone of contention, is continuing undiminished;

AND WHEREAS in a manner of speaking, lack of any definite decision by Council regarding this issue is interpreted by the North Shore Mountain Biking Association as tacit approval to continue not only with extreme biking on the slopes of Mount Fromme but also with the construction of more Biking trails on the sensitive, forested, rain drenched and steep slopes of Mount Fromme;

AND WHEREAS this constitutes a *fait accompli* of a matter which should be decided by Council only;

AND WHEREAS any enquiries by Councillor Crist and members of the public as to when the *Alpine Area Strategic Recreation Study* will be presented to Council have met with no specific commitment and/or deadline by staff;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff be requested to expedite this matter and commit to a definite deadline pertaining to the submission of the Alpine Strategic Study for Council's consideration so as to enable Council to make a decision on the continued use of the delicate and sensitive slopes of Mount Fromme for extreme Mountain Biking; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT District staff be instructed not to prepare such a *Alpine Area Strategic Recreation Study* on the assumption that to accommodate extreme mountain biking outside the regular and hard surfaced roads and/or trails in the District with the resulting negative impact on the environment and the subsequent fiscal implications for the District including the potential impact on residential neighborhoods, is a District responsibility.

To whom it may concern

I must apologize for not being able to attend tonight's meeting; I have a prior commitment that I can not get out of tonight. I wish I could speak before council tonight, and I hope this Letter will still be respected.

I am a member of the mountain bike community, and a trail builder. I have sent a few letters in the past to council which introduce myself and my perspectives on the sport. To summarize (if it matters), I am a 39 year old father of 2, I am a professional, and I am a part owner in small design firm off lower Lonsdale. I am a home owner,

a tax payer.

I can not believe that council is still entertaining and wasting time and money over this issue. Ernie has brought this issue before council so many times only to be denied because of the absurdity of his request.

I believe it is council's responsibility this time to penalize and reprimand Mr. Crist for costing all of us money. I understand that the issue on Fromme is a hot item for the district, but I also understand that council has put a great deal of thought into the issue in the past and has decided to allow it to happen to date for good reason. This alone should be enough for Ernie.

I would like to address several of the issues as I see them, hopefully some of these ideas will help council in over-ruling Ernie's request.

1. Until the Alpine Area Strategic Recreation Study is complete, No Decision on Biking should be made.

If you ban bikes until the study is completed, that would be like arresting someone before you investigate whether they committed a crime or not. Until the Study can confirm that Mountain Biking on Fromme has a negative impact on the ecosystem as a whole, access should not be denied.

We all admit that the trails do impact the forest in the immediate location of the trail, but to say that this has a negative effect on the ecosystem as a whole is another thing. People (Hikers) have been cutting trails through pristine forests for access as long as People have been on this planet, what makes a trail made for Bikes any different than a trail made for hikers. If Ernie wants to close and ban Bike trails, He needs to ban and close the Hiking trails too. (Baden Powel) both have the same impact environmentally.

2. I do not understand Ernie's use of the term "Extreme Mountain Biking". He needs to be much more clear in the use of this term.

If he was a mountain biker, he would understand that that term really only applies to several trails like "the Flying Circus" or "Air Supply". These trails are for the Extreme Cyclist. The rest of the trails on Fromme, though difficult to ride, are not considered extreme and are ridden by the averagely skilled mountain biker (at least average for BC). The Irony of the use of this term by Mr. Crist is that the 2 trails I listed as Extreme; probably have the least impact on the environment. The Flying Circus is primarily an elevated trail in the trees (which is the preferred method of construction for trails through sensitive areas of forest on Seymore, trails like CBC have had government funding to help finance the elevated stunts over sensitive areas.), and "Air Supply" is built on an old Logging cut/Drag out trail, that is a left-over scar across the mountain from its deforestation less than 80 years ago. It traverses across the face of the mountain, not down the fall line, so it has not affected any sensitive environmental areas nor created any additional erosion problems. Ernie needs to define what he means with the use of this term because it is not helping his argument.

3. Ernie is trying to ban the largest user group from the forest. I do not have the stats on the actual number of users in the woods at any given time, but from my experience as a trail builder (lower Griffen Switchbacks) and rider, the numbers seem to be at least 2 to 1 in favour of cyclist. As well, most of this bike traffic is using the upper part of the mountain above the BP trail, where as the majority of the Hikers / dog walkers stay on or below the BP. Added to this is the fact that the trails, both biker and Hiker are currently maintained by volunteers from the cycling community in cooperation with the District and you can see that taking the bikers out of the forest would create more problems than good. Ernie wants to ban the largest user group for issues he can not back up and this would mean that the existing hiking trail network would need to be maintained by volunteers from the hiking community or the DNV itself. (assuming the biker trails be decommissioned)

The North Shore Mountains, and Fromme in particular, are world famous, Closure of these trails would create an international negative reaction towards the district. Add to this the loss of tourist dollars to the local economy (primarily North Van) and it would seem to me that a ban would cost the district even more than just bad publicity.

4. The bigger problem facing the ecosystem and environment on Fromme as I see it is garbage and dog droppings. The lower parts of the mountain, the areas accessed by the average day hiker / dog walker, have more litter on them than do the trails much higher up which are primarily used by the bikers and the serious hikers. As well, dog dropping litter the edge of the trails and the access road all the way up to the water towers. This issue is not to be taken lightly; there is a lot of dog droppings up there. It is risky to stop your bike on the side of the access road below the towers without getting something stuck in your tires, or shoes. All of the imported debris eventually gets washed down the hill and into the water supply system of the very ponds and tributary streams that Ernie is claiming to be protecting. In my opinion, this high content of fecal contamination to the water systems is a much larger problem than the additional sedimentary run off he claims is created by the trail construction down the fall lines. If he really wants to protect the ecosystem, he should be pioneering a ban on Dogs in the forest.

5. Ernie's submission of this issue states that Bikers are continuing with "the construction of more Biking trails on the sensitive, forested, rain drenched and steep slopes of Mount Fromme" This is not true. As far as I know, and with all due respect to the NSMBA. No new trails are being cut on Fromme. All work has been focused on the repair of the existing trails. This is a big issue with all members of the NSMBA, and we are all aware of where and what we are allowed to do in the woods. Each of us trail workers has had to submit a request and a description of the type of work we intend to do, to the district for approval, and all NSMBA trail days have been focused on fixing and improving the existing trail network with the main focus being on reducing the environmental impact / footprint of the trail and increasing the drainage and consequentially the sustainability of the trails. I believe the current moratorium on trail building has actually helped focus this group to make great improvements in current trail construction methods and has united the NSMBA in a common goal like never before.

I hope you make the right decisions tonight, and I hope you can put a stop to Ernie and his waste of your time and my money.

Thank you

Please feel free to contact me for comment or support at any time.

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