

**Subject:****Date:** Thu, 4 Aug 2005 18:01:02 -0700**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>**To:** <fonvca@fonvca.org>, "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, "James Ridge" <James\_Ridge@dnv.org>**CC:** <mmillerchip@nsnews.com>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

The recently released District of North Vancouver "Diversity Policy - 2005 Implementation Plan" is not doing very well in my class. Indeed, I will give it failing grades. I will be accused of being a redneck even a racist, of course, but that does not necessarily mean I am wrong. In my opinion it is not so much a Diversity Policy as it is a diversionary policy geared to gloss over the real issues including leadership in the cultural and social areas - a balloon filled with gas and fluff, totally ineffective but expensive.

In my opinion, the Diversity Policy was implemented by the District some years ago because it was the "yell" of the day. In reality, it is nothing but yet another excuse to use up more paper while doing little for anybody, least of all to stimulate or develop the talents and cultural wealth minorities have to offer. It explains why members of these minorities hardly participate in the local democratic process, and why most of them do not know that the West was won, sometimes with blood, against ignorance and exploiters of all creeds and that every single benefit we enjoy today was won through hard and bitter struggles including even to prevent the North Shore from becoming a crime ridden and treenedud place like Surrey.

To begin with, all policies, including this one, should be reviewed periodically and this should be done in public to see whether they work, what if anything they have done for the community, what was expected, provided, of course, we know what that was. None of this is indicated in the report. The reason, in my opinion, is that nobody really knows, there is not really much to say. Also, bureaucrats prefer the mystery - it is safer.

Diversity in itself is not a goal or objective and it never was or should have been. We already know that we have diversity. Indeed we have all the diversity we need and then some. Yet the Diversity Policy offers nothing except to tell us that we have diversity, more or less.

For everyone's benefit we should draw "Diversity" into the public process, especially in the social and cultural areas, but this is the one thing which is not addressed in the report. I venture to say the reason is because the authors themselves do not understand. Periodically, they dust off the policy and go through the motions without any purpose much like a retired horse might run along with the working horses from the same stable just out of sheer habit.

Every policy needs its justification, of course, and this policy is no exception. The reasons are listed in the appendix under "Dates For Municipal Recognition of Community Diversity".

The list is impressively long and includes such gems as "Black History Month" but not a word about peoples struggles for decent wages, working or living conditions. Listed also is "Access Awareness Day", "International Day of the Older Person", Together Against Violence Day". This is a committee which was formed years ago to meet over coffee and cake to resolutely condemn violence but when I suggested that they support my motion to stop corporate sponsored gratuitous violence on TV, which is the real killer, there was but a big yawn.

Listed also is "International Migrants Day". Does this include Albertans who are coming to BC to cool off? There is even

"International Day Against Homophobia". There is also "Universal Children's Day" but when I made a motion, several in fact, that we press Senior levels of government to introduce universal childcare, as has been promised by the Liberals since Hector was a pup, nobody showed up in support. I suppose it was Hockey Night in Canada.


What I missed on the lengthy list is international constipation awareness day and that is truly a shame. However, in all seriousness, I believe that both the policy and the money spent on the bureaucracy to keep it going should be reviewed.

If you want my personal opinion, this program should be scrapped and the money used to support social and cultural diversity for all who cannot meet or perform for lack of space. A community Center in Lynn Valley was scrapped by the District and the community space eliminated while the cost of the project, now a Library only, doubled - no more space for "diversity".

During the last budget meeting District Councillors were not even allowed to ask questions when delegations appeared to ask for grants. That is what it has come to in the District - that is the situation. It was bad under Bell, under Harris, it is infinitely worse but the bureaucrats love it - the mystery is complete. Still, I say, let all the would be benefactors listed come forward and tell us in their own words why we should continue to spend taxpayers money on Diversity. Just tell us why? It is always possible that I missed something. But, of course, there would be no support from Council, I suspect - it would not be politically correct.

Ernie Crist

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