

Subject: BC Community Charter

Date: Sat, 11 May 2002 19:03:45 -0700

From: Colin Stark <cstark@npsnet.com>

To: (Recipient list suppressed)

Doug Porter and I attended the Forum this weekend; it now seems that Campbell/Nebbeling will push through Community Charter changes next January; public consultation may occur in July/August; expect an announcement at one of the next two Cabinet meetings.

This Fri/Sat Forum sponsored by UBC/Langara College Continuing Studies gave a few clues about the direction of this critically important (DBI - Dull and Boring, but Important) piece of legislation

Proceedings have been videotaped. I will show these tapes (5 hours but we can probably fast-forward through them in 1-2 hours) at my place at 12:30pm Tuesday, May 14th -- seating limited, phone for a "reservation"

I will put up the three speeches on our website www.npsnet.com/cdd as soon as I receive them by e-mail. And I will try to get a summary of the tapes up on the website in a week or so, courtesy of Pedro Mauro

Minister of State for Community Charter Ted Nebbeling on Sat, May 11th, was guarded in his speech, but gave NO hope that anything approaching GOVERNANCE REFORM will come out of this legislation; he point-blank refuted Direct Democracy, and hinted that opportunities for referenda would be even further restricted

Main points appear (nothing is official yet) to be:

An increase in taxing powers to municipalities that is more apparent than real;

A REAL suppression of Democracy by loosening (perhaps illegally?) the requirements for public process before granting development permits;

A granting of powers to municipalities to enter into PPPs

Warnke labelled these moves "Libertarian/Anarchist" rather than traditional "Right or Left"

He doubted if the changes would be legal without holding a GENUINE referendum

Marzari characterized the changes as:

Constitutional;;

Economic;

Social;

Political

Carrel compared the degree of accountability of governments to citizens, to that of Enron, BCE, and Northern Telecom to their shareholders

All three panel members were scathing in their assessment of the ACCOUNTABILITY of ALL levels of government to anyone, especially to the people.

Colin

Appendix

Forwarded message:

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CONTINUING STUDIES

In partnership with Continuing Studies, Langara College

Present a public forum on

THE COMMUNITY CHARTER: STRENGTHENING OR WEAKENING THE CITIZEN VOICE AT CITY HALL?

The British Columbia government announced last Fall that they were developing a Community Charter “to give communities the powers and resources to make local decisions locally”. A Minister of State for Community Charter was appointed, and a discussion paper circulated, culminating in a White Paper tabled in the Legislative Assembly this spring. Public consultation is now being sought before the Community Charter Council makes its final report to Cabinet.

Several principles have been established in preparing the Community Charter, including that “municipal governments must be democratically elected, responsible, accountable and accessible”. Possibly more contentious is a proposed move to a “more corporate model of accountability”. What does this really mean?

The paper discusses measures such as closed council meetings and a reduction in the use of referenda. Further, it also states that local governments may be able to operate more effectively and efficiently, saving both time and money, by eliminating many of the present requirements to seek voter approval. “Instead of relying on voter assent to allow public input into decision-making, municipalities would be accountable to [their]citizens through public notice, hearings, annual reports, annual meetings and performance measures.”

Will the Charter mean more power for Municipal Council and less for voters? Here is an opportunity to find out about the draft provisions, to discuss their implications, and to give some feedback to the government on your reactions.

The program will include a panel discussion on Friday evening, followed by a morning of break-out groups, which we hope will come up for recommendations for the government.

Panelists:

DARLENE MARZARI, former Minister of Municipal Affairs

ANDRE CARREL, former Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Rossland, author of *Citizens' Hall: Making Local Democracy Work* and consultant for local government

BEN MARR, Provincial Representative, Community Charter Council

Representative from the Union of B.C. Municipalities (TBA), withdrew at the last minute, "because the legislation was not tabled by the beginning of May", and was replaced by Alan Warnke, former Liberal MLA

We have invited Minister Ted Nebbeling to speak on the Saturday morning.

Friday, May 10, 7-9:30 pm and Saturday, May 11 9:30-12:30 pm,

