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RICHTER: Reading the tea leaves on election 2014

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Now the hurly-burly's done, now the battle's lost and won.

With another election wrapped, it's time to "fork over the entrails" as my old editor Martin Millerchip liked to say.

It's one thing to report who got elected and who didn't, but there are some subtleties in the actual numbers that offer a window into the hearts and minds of the community. Or at least the 25 per cent or so that bothered to vote.

As predicted, the City of North Vancouver provided the closest and, uh, most colourful race.

Mayor Darrell Mussatto won, but not with the 75 per cent landslide he enjoyed in 2011. He netted 5,488 votes - 52.5 per cent of all ballots cast. His only serious challenger was Kerry Morris who finished just under 900 votes - or 8.5 percentage points - behind.

Voter turnout went up roughly 30 per cent in the city, seeing an extra 3,485 more people cast a ballot.

But Mussatto only got 451 more votes than he did in 2011. So Morris, who ran as the anti-development alternative to Mussatto, can probably be credited with bringing more people to the polls than would have come otherwise, even though it didn't change the outcome of the election.

One major difference is likely the amount of money spent. We won't know for sure until the campaign finance disclosure documents are filed and made public in 90 days. The Vancouver Sun's Lori Culbert reported that Morris put up \$60,000 of his own money for the race, which is more than what Mussatto spent for his win in 2011.

But the electoral boost for the main anti-density challenger didn't transfer over to the council race in which Holly Back, a candidate supported by Mussatto, won the only open council seat. This was a little surprising given how much of the campaign debate and social media chatter in the run up to Nov. 15 was driven by the message of change, anger over density and putting blame for today's traffic woes on council.

It will be interesting to see how the dynamic of council changes now that Mussatto appears to have a solid majority with Couns. Craig Keating, Linda Buchanan, and Back.

I'm particularly interested in seeing what will happen with the stalled official community plan, which was left in legislative limbo when the density-light version of it was voted down by council. The same goes for implementing the Roger Brooks vision for the Shipyards and central waterfront and setting up a business improvement area in Lower Lonsdale. These are all things Mussatto didn't necessarily have the votes on council to push through before. As an aside, I'm also curious to see what council will be like without Don Bell filling the role of kingmaker on these split votes.

Similarly in the district, I wouldn't have been surprised to see some of the open council seats become occupied by antidensity campaigners. But, Hazen Colbert, one of the fight against Lynn Valley Centre's redevelopment into towers, finished dead last.

I suppose one lesson learned is that the outrage you see on social media, letters to the editor or in the council gallery isn't necessarily matched by outrage in the general population.

In West Vancouver, there was a subtle shifting of public opinion that isn't necessarily obvious at first glance when every incumbent was re-elected.

Craig Cameron and Nora Gambioli topped the polls and Bill Soprovich - who was born in West Vancouver council chambers and pretty consistently wins the most council votes - slipped to fourth place.

This has to be the ghost of Grosvenor coming back to haunt him in Ambleside. Cameron and Gambioli led the fight against the six-storey project and Soprovich made himself the swing most visible faces in the From page 6 vote that saw the project approved.

In the view of my North Shore News colleague Jeremy Shepherd, West Vancouver's only newcomer Christine Cassidy might look to reform the district's political structure over her four-year term. Cassidy was one of the only council candidates who said definitively that district staff wield too much power.

And while some council candidates may have been wary of alienating West Vancouver's development community, Cassidy spoke with urgency about the need to regulate big homes that infringe on the rights of neighbours.

So there's a quick mopup on the election that was.

The new councils will be sworn in on Dec. 1 and the campaigning for election 2018, I presume, starts the next day.

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