

north shore news

Loss of rental housing an issue

Hazen Colbert / North Shore News

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North Vancouver - Dear Editor: On June 16 the District of North Vancouver will convene a public hearing to hear from the community with respect to the redevelopment of the Mountain Court property along East 27th Street near Mountain Highway. The property is one of the last medium-sized affordable rental locations in the district. The redevelopment will displace 80 families and 225 people.

During the DNV council first reading of the bylaw empowering the redevelopment, the voice of Lisa Muri, who addressed the issue of the destruction of affordable rental housing, was muted by the voices of others who were more concerned about the appearance of window trim on the new buildings than the loss of affordable housing.

The district's official community plan places a priority on retaining and building affordable housing, especially affordable seniors' housing. The district has been presented with options on how to retain affordable housing including the model used in Lake Tahoe. A further suggestion made was to use community amenity contributions, or CACs, from the development to build additional affordable seniors' housing at the Kiwanis site around the corner on Whiteley Court. The district refuses to consider these alternatives. District general manager of planning Brian Bydwell has gone so far as to claim that the redevelopment of Mountain Court does not generate enough profit

for the applicant to justify CACs. A 2013 report from District staff stated that \$43.3 million in development cost charges and CACs from the redevelopment of Lynn Valley town centre, including the Mountain Court application, would be needed to balance the district's budget.

The mind-numbing close-mindedness of district senior staff and some members of council to innovative solutions to this province's affordable housing crisis is worrisome. What is more unconscionable is the institutional absence of compassion for the 80 families who will be displaced, many of whom are single parents and seniors.

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