

north shore news

Trash castle cleanup ordered in North Vancouver

Panorama Drive property owners told to clear 20 years of debris

Chris Slater / North Shore News

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Panorama Drive neighbours Margie Goodman and Kristian Whitehead are angered the District of North Vancouver has allowed the owners of a property adjacent to Whitehead's and up-slope from Goodman's to accumulate debris to a point where it is now hazardous. Photo Mike Wakefield

The District of North Vancouver has told the owners of a Deep Cove property chock-full of junk: Clean up your property or we'll do it for you and bill you for the trouble.

The property at 2755 Panorama Dr., owned by Charles (Chuck) and Constance Band, has been the subject of numerous complaints over the last 20 years because of debris strewn about the area, yard cars, and heaps of construction materials and derelict industrial equipment.

The home has also undergone renovations without building or development permits, adding to the concerns of neighbours.

Neighbour and geologist Kristian Whitehead said the junk has prevented him from completing the survey work necessary to put in a new retaining wall on his own steep property, as the current one is badly in need of replacement.

"The big thing with this particular property is that risk has pronounced over time and we can't wait any longer for the things that are occurring," he said. "So as of today I am unable to go forward with the replacement of my wall. I have significant risk to the property and environment."

Neighbour Margie Goodman, who lives across the street on the down-sloping land, expressed her concerns of potential flooding and debris flow during the winter months and the dangers associated with the property across from her.

She expressed anger to council on the amount of time she said it has taken them to resolve the issues thus far, let

alone the six months of additional time the homeowners will be granted to complete renovations after obtaining permits, which must be no later than July 30 according to a letter sent to the Band residence in April.

"How about us? How about our homes, our lives, our children? My grandchildren live with me. That sucker could come down and totally wipe us all out," she said.

Coun. Lisa Muri requested that council look into reviewing current policies in place for dealing with properties in this condition.

"I'd like to apologize to the neighbourhood as a councillor in the District of North Vancouver and to our new neighbours and residents," she said. "It is amazing to me that it has taken us 20 years to deal with this site and if that is the policy within the municipality right now, to deal with properties such as this . . . I want a review of that policy and that process."

Coun. Roger Bassam expressed urgency on making sure the situation is resolved in a timely matter.

"My expectation is that we move as quickly as possible as an organization . . . I think in this situation here, we need to use every available tool to ensure this happens as quickly as possible," said Bassam.

In the end, council voted unanimously in favour of seeking a remedial action order for the property owners to clean up the debris in their yard. The homeowners have until July 15 to completely remove all debris from their property before the district takes action in the removal process and bills the homeowners for it. Although not directly related to the remedial action order approved Monday, the homeowners must also apply for both a building permit and a development permit no later than June 15.

Charles Band did not respond when contacted for comment on the remedial action order.

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