

# north shore news

## West Vancouver dismisses amalgamation

### Combined services find little support at council Monday

[Jeremy Shepherd](#) / North Shore News

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District of West Vancouver hall Photograph by: file, North Shore News

While representatives of the [City and District of North Vancouver have expressed some support for amalgamation \(http://www.nsnews.com/news/city-of-north-vancouver-council-divided-on-restructure-study-1.876178\)](http://www.nsnews.com/news/city-of-north-vancouver-council-divided-on-restructure-study-1.876178), the issue was largely dead on arrival in West Vancouver Monday.

Following a February [vote by the District of North Vancouver to study the issue, Mayor Richard Walton \(http://www.nsnews.com/city-of-north-vancouver-council-divided-on-restructure-study-1.876178\)](http://www.nsnews.com/city-of-north-vancouver-council-divided-on-restructure-study-1.876178) invited neighbouring mayors to weigh in on the controversial topic.

While he stopped short of favouring combining governments, West Van Coun. Craig Cameron suggested that looking at combining services was a "no-lose proposition."

"This is something we need to be doing for our citizens and our taxpayers to ensure that we're being efficient. We have a lot of politicians running a relatively small population on the North Shore," he said.

His view was virulently opposed by Coun. Bill Soprovich, who pounded the desk to emphasize his point.

"I suggest the mayor send the letter over and say, 'Don't bother us again with that nonsense and do your own housekeeping,'"

he said. "I'm not closing my mind on anything in the future but I assure you, we stand up proud for West Vancouver. There'll be no amalgamation as long as I'm on council."

Coun. Nora Gambioli took umbrage with Soprovich's words.

"I would remind Coun. Soprovich that he's only one of seven people," she said.

Cameron stressed that West Vancouver should focus on combining services such as the North Shore Emergency Management Office, in which West Van is a partner, and the North Vancouver Recreation Commission, in which West Vancouver does not play a role.

"I don't see how having more information and discussions is threatening, and I don't know what Coun. Soprovich is railing against but it certainly isn't something that's being put forward at council," he said.

While Mayor Michael Smith granted the validity of Cameron's points, he also agreed with Soprovich.

"There's lots of areas where we can save everybody on the North Shore money, but West Vancouver is a different community than North Van," he said. "I don't think there's any interest whatsoever. ... from our citizens to amalgamate with North Vancouver."

While Smith favoured integration of services, such as garbage pickup, he pointed to the time constraints faced by district staff.

"We only have so much staff and they only have so much time," he said. "If they're going to spend a lot of time on a study that we conclude is going nowhere, then that's a lot of time that (district staff is) not going to be spending on priorities that this council has set."

Smith said he would discuss the issue with Walton and City of North Vancouver Mayor Darrell Mussatto.

Amalgamation was also a tough sell at city council, with Mussatto citing the 70 kilometres of asbestos cement pipe the district is currently replacing at a cost of \$3 million per year.

"Until they've dealt with their liabilities like concrete asbestos pipes. ... I'm not interested in talking to them," Mussatto said.

District of North Vancouver Coun. Doug MacKay-Dunn, a longtime champion of amalgamation, said the only way to verify Mussatto's comments is to look at both sets of books.

"Like anything else, the proof is in the pudding, so let's get a pudding committee together," he said.

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