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Concerned residents discounted as NIMBYs

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West Vancouver - Dear Editor: It comes as no surprise that West Vancouver council voted to endorse the Maison development proposal. It is apparent to those of us unfortunate to be pitched into this process involuntarily that we, the residents and taxpayers of West Vancouver, mean very little to our municipal government.

While the district is happy to collect taxes from us, we as residents are regarded as nuisances to be tolerated but ultimately ignored. The municipal manifestation of Godwin's Law is that any meaningful debate is extinguished by discounting concerned residents as NIMBYs, and those voices can then be invalidated and ignored.

What transpired in the Maison process exemplifies how flawed the planning process is, and how those with power in our municipal government are failing us, as long as we are not profit-driven developers. There was no attempt at

actual due diligence in determining the answers to the critical questions: Does West Vancouver need another prohibitively expensive seniors' facility? Is this a suitable location? Is this quality care? What are negative impacts of spot zoning? Should a community be able to shape itself and the changes that ensue? Does this serve the people of our community? To all these questions, West Vancouver just didn't care. All the answers indicated Maison should have been soundly rejected.

Unfortunately, it wasn't.

Why? Money. As long as there is a developer with deep pockets, the district will fawn over them and ensure they get what they want and use whatever rationalization to push it through. Unless residents are able to match the money developers give the municipalities as community amendment contributions, we will continue to be second-class citizens and all our neighbourhoods are at risk. Instead of actually attempting to get its financial house in order, West Vancouver prefers to continue a gravy train of fiscal irresponsibility and unsustainability. With the exception of Bill Soprovich, who is willing to stand up for residents and neighbourhoods, we are poorly served by this council. In this election year, something needs to change.

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