

Summary by Corrie Kost.

Disclaimer: Don't take my word of what transpired as fact – please verify with the speakers on any critical points.

5.6 Governance: Global Actions and Visioning

Corrie to give summary of WV presentation by Martha Piper & Michael Byers

This free meeting was sponsored by West Vancouver Citizens for Good Governance (WVCGG) and was held 7:30pm Nov 1/2007 at the Key Meek Studio Theatre, 1700 Mathers Ave in West Vancouver. It was well attended – however I could not find anyone I knew from NV that was present. This meeting was in no way connected to “rating” politicians but was on the general issue of what constitutes “good governance”.

Dr. Michael Byers (researcher in international law and politics at UBC) – hailed from Lethbridge Alberta, and as a 15 yr-old campaigned successfully to reduce a 500 home development planned to go into a river valley to about ¼ of that scope. Lesson: One can make a difference. He described some “connections” – the first was putting to bed any doubt about climate change - amply demonstrated by trends and expectation that the arctic ocean – some 1.2million sq-km will be ice-free within 10 years. It's not the melting that will raise the level of oceans – it's the expansion of water due to temperature increase that will dominate. This will impact the West Vancouver waterfront residents. The second connection – drugs in downtown east Vancouver, the war in Afganistan, and property crime in Vancouver – which currently is second in North America only to Miami. He suggested Canadian government buy the harvested drugs directly from Afganistan. Municipal governments need to get directly involved in such issues – especially as they are more nimble and flexible – and thus become leaders in dealing with the impacts of climate change. He noted that Chicago is the leader in CO2 reduction, while Norway is expected to be CO2 neutral in coming decades. **“Think big or we won't be able to thing small”!**

Dr. Martha Piper (past UBC president) indicated **that it takes more than talent to tackle climate change – it takes nerve and hard work.** Crafting of the vision was critical – giving focus to a community. There needs to be tension between consulting and the required action. Consulting means listening and perhaps agreeing, but perhaps not. Not every issue needs to go to referendum. She described the Aesop fable “Bell the Cat” <http://www.bartleby.com/17/1/67.html> - the message being that “it is easy to propose impossible to implement remedies”. Piper felt the need to align day-to-day municipal workers with the “vision” – say by changing/restructuring the various committee organizations so they all work towards the same common goals/visions. An annual hardcopy “scorecard” to keep accountability on track was essential. [*message here to DNV council!*]. The impact of “industrialization” was likened to the earth being struck by a giant meteor – except it's happening more slowly.

It was suggested that, with practice, **writing letters to the editors of newspapers can have an impact.** It was suggested that governance policies should be set by a “board” and not the public. The king of leaders we need are those who believe and practice that **“Good governance means telling the truth even if they do not want to hear it”!**

After the meeting I asked Martha Piper if she felt whether it was appropriate to only put the annual report of a municipality on a web site and not make it available in hardcopy format. She agreed that this was NOT appropriate and that **hardcopies are an essential element of an annual report.**