

north shore news

Council's closed meetings justified

Retiring Coun. Alan Nixon / North Shore News

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Dear Editor: Re: District of North Vancouver council's dirty little secret.

I take extreme umbrage at Trevor Carolan's latest malicious ramblings pertaining to the issue of "closed" or "in-camera" meeting regimes. One of the main reasons I ran for council in 2002 was to attempt to put an end to the fractious, contentious, divisive, disrespectful and downright unproductive nature of the 1996-1999 council meetings. I hasten to add that Mr. Carolan was a member of that self-same council and did little to illuminate the proceedings!

No facts here either - cjk

Without debating or challenging Carolan's statistics around numbers and hours of meetings, the facts remain. Namely, the cohesive, collaborative, constructive and productive nature of the meetings that have been held.

The point was - could they not have been open? - cik

I can assure the public that the meetings that have been "secret" or "in-camera" have been fully justified under the rules under which we operate, namely the Local Government Act and the Community Charter. Our municipal clerk and mayor have often been challenged by myself and other councillors as to the appropriateness of the reasons to close. We have nearly always been satisfied with the answers. When there has been the slightest doubt, we have opted for open deliberation.

The simple facts remain that over the past few years we have been operating in a much more complex and litigious environment than existed in Mr. Carolan's relatively halcyon, nirvanic time on council. We have also been dealing with many very complex land issues and land transactions as a result of moving forward with the implementation of the Official Community Plan adopted in 2011.

Something new here - "manager's workshops" - what are they?
Were they posted on web? - cik

Today's council meetings are an example to the community of civility and constructive, respectful dialogue that have served to advance the status of the District of North Vancouver instead of diminishing it as was the case during Carolan's tenure. One of the reasons for this is the intense scrutiny of bylaw and development proposals during the preliminary discussions held "incamera," in manager's workshops or committee of the whole meetings.

I, along with many others, believe effective and efficient administration and stewardship of the taxpayers' best interest is more important than

whether the meeting gets held in-camera or in the council chamber.

This is the key point of discussion on
"democracy vs. efficiency" - cjk

On another note, I seriously appreciate Carolan's characterization of me as being a "poodle" - one of the most intelligent animals on the planet!!

Retiring Coun. Alan Nixon District of North Vancouver

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