

Subject: [Fwd: Fw: (Livable Communities) Fw: Nelson Story]

Date: Wed, 31 Oct 2001 13:04:00 -0800

From: Brian Platts <brian_platts@telus.net>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

CC: Dave Sadler <davesadler@telus.net>

Subject: Fw: (Livable Communities) Fw: Nelson Story

Date: Wed, 31 Oct 2001 12:37:35 -0800

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----- Original Message -----

From: [Cheeying Ho](#)

To: [livable communities](#)

Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2001 2:44 PM

Subject: (Livable Communities) Fw: Nelson Story

Here is a great success story of what happened in Nelson and what a community can achieve. I was in Nelson in March giving a talk on smart growth, and had the opportunity to meet with a bunch of the folks involved in this waterfront proposal. This just shows what perseverance, creativity, and a great community vision can do!

[Cheeying](#)

"BCBC has made the right decision in choosing to sell a prime piece of Nelson waterfront land to local investors, instead of to the neighbouring mall's owner (Great West Life Realty). GWL was poised to use the land for an expanded stand-alone Wal-Mart, with vast areas of asphalt for parking of course. Parking with a great view!

"Months of protests from citizens (letters, articles, full page ads, two rallies, a petition with over 4300 names) had no effect on our open-for-business City Council. They passed up the chance to buy the land and chose to let the market do its thing.

"Well, instead the community did its thing. About 15 investors were rounded up by former city Councillor Dave Elliott, who's been proposing a mixed use development (seniors housing, studios, some retail) in line with our Official Community Plan. With \$1.1 million in hand, they put in a proposal to BCBC for the land. And, they were chosen! Thankfully BCBC had more than the bottom line as part of its criteria for selection.

"So now the investors (the Central Waterfront Group) are exploring covenants and other options, and will then seek out developers who want to do the right thing on our valuable waterfront.

"A small, but important, victory."

[And here are the next steps as described by the Central Waterfront Group:](#)

A WATERFRONT FULL OF POSSIBILITIES

Between October 1st and 15th something remarkable happened in Nelson: A group of residents, many of whom didn't know each other and some of whom had previously found themselves at political odds, discovered what they shared in common was a passionate resolve to see Nelson's predominate natural amenity - the waterfront - be developed in a manner consistent with the spirit as well as the letter, of Nelson's Official Community Plan (OCP). And, they made a conscious decision to back up that resolve with the financial commitment necessary to purchase the land.

While news of the Central Waterfront Group's success has quickly spread, so has the question, "Now What?" In the last few days it's become apparent that this question clearly means different things to different people,

depending on what side of the political/ideological fence one sits - In the time-honored Nelson tradition, it's a question that carries with it as many assumptions, myths, misinformation and paranoia, as it does visionary possibilities.

In recognition of the general public's desire to know the true facts surrounding the Central Waterfront Group and its plans for the property, this column is written specifically to address questions which can be answered now. Development of this land will not happen overnight and, therefore, other columns will appear in the future, as details of public interest emerge.

To begin with, British Columbia Buildings Corporation should be acknowledged and commended for fulfilling their public mandate. Many were suspicious of BCBC's motives and involvements in the sale of this property, suspicions which, in the end, proved to be unfounded. At \$1,100,000 plus our commitment to see the property developed in a manner consistent with Nelson's OCP, the offer submitted by the Central Waterfront Group was fair financially as well as meeting BCBC's mission to "choose business practices which consider the full financial and environmental implications" and "achieve the best solutions for the best value."

The land in question occupies a strategic location on Nelson's central waterfront. Our group believes that development of this land will exert great influence over the direction, aesthetics and mix of future development on the waterfront as a whole. However, the Central Waterfront Group will not be the actual developer of this land. Our mission as a group is three-fold:

* First, to hold the land until covenants can be researched and registered which will insure development in a manner consistent with the OCP, without being so restrictive as to make development unaffordable.

* Second, to identify current as well as future community needs which development of this land can most suitably address -- "Planned community" style seniors housing has already been identified as one major component which our group intends to see included.

* Third, to actively market the land in order to secure a developer or developers whose values and objectives mirror our own. Even before our offer was submitted, preliminary discussions with some developers had already begun and are continuing.

In each of the above areas, the Group is being advised by a number of experienced legal, accounting, economic and property development professionals.

The Central Waterfront Group recognizes that there are at least 4,000 people out there (i.e. last summer's waterfront petition) who feel like they have a stake in what happens with this property. We are committed to making sure that the public feels it is being given a chance for input. The first such opportunity will be at 7pm on Saturday, November 3rd at the New Grand Hotel. This evening is part of the on-going "Designing Communities" series. A significant part of the evening will be devoted to a presentation of Nelson waterfront concepts and sketches, produced during a design charrette held earlier in the day and led by Vancouver developer Harold Kalke and architect Joost Baker. Public discussion and comment will be invited at that time. As future details unfold, the Group anticipates more opportunities for public input.

We are looking forward to working with City Council. We hope that Council will choose to join its resources, power and influence with our own, to realize a lasting legacy for the future of Nelson -- One that will showcase

the unique character and vision of our community, as well as set an example for other cities, of how long term economic and social dynamism is shaped by community resolve.

No one is under the illusion that development of this land will be easy or immediate, but clearly with our community-based purchase, the possibilities for creative and visionary development are infinitely greater than they would have been otherwise.

It's important to categorically state that the Central Waterfront Group is not "anti-Walmart." In fact, we believe that a vibrant mixed-use development on this adjacent property will increase customer volume at Walmart and the Chahko Mika Mall generally. We do not envision allowing any part of a larger Walmart store to be located on this land, but we do see areas where we can work cooperatively together -- One specific area being "parking solutions" as both a larger Walmart and any development which happens on our land will require them. For its part, Walmart is on record as saying they are committed to remaining in Nelson and willing to work with the community to expand at their existing location. As "neighbors," we anticipate a positive and productive relationship.

The central waterfront lands comprise one of the few remaining spaces in Nelson which is both level and can be integrated with the downtown core. In this regard, we are also looking forward to working cooperatively with the newly constituted Leisure Centre Committee, the Advisory Planning Committee, the Nelson & Area Economic Development Corporation and others, to further the process of shaping the evolution of Nelson's urban design in the 21st century.

Along with many others in the community, even those of us who are part of the Central Waterfront Group stand in awe of the faith, generosity and commitment to community, demonstrated by the successful effort to acquire this land. We hope as a result, everyone in Nelson regardless of politics or ideology will take pride that they live in a place so loved.

The Central Waterfront Group
