

**Subject: What is the meaning of the formation of two new civic parties "NET" North Van Electors Team and "NsET" North Shore Electors Team?**

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

Two new North Vancouver District civic groups (parties) the North Vancouver Electors Team NET and the North Shore Electors Team also NET (NsET) have recently been formed to attempt to seize control of District Council in the upcoming Municipal Election this Fall.

According to a recent statement by NET spokesman, David Moulton, the North Vancouver Electors Team ("NET) is a broadly based, non-partisan group of electors who support community leaders for election to North Vancouver District Council". NET it goes on "seeks to encourage quality candidates who will make the most of the time they have, the District staff and the revenue available".

"It supports candidates by putting quality research at their fingertips, by promoting a long-term view of decision - making, and by encouraging Councillors to lead through respect for one another, for staff and the public".

"North Vancouver District needs members of council who are clear thinkers, who conduct themselves in a professional manner, and who are capable of creating a legislative agenda and seeing it through".

The key to understanding the sudden interest in local politics by more than one group "NET" (Moulton) and the other "NET" (NsET) (Pegg). both of whom represent North Shore business interests, is the community charter and the opportunities this provides to control local Councils. "The District needs visionary leadership". stated David Moulton from NET.

"The Community Charter" he continued "will replace the Local government Act in the fall of 2002". "Under the Charter, Councils will be given more authority, more autonomy and more control over issues affecting their communities". "The scope of work of council will be much broader". "We must elect accountable representatives who are capable of leading within this changed, and challenging, context".

" The North Vancouver Electors Team" he said "originally wanted to be called the North Shore Electors Team but had to change their name because the North Shore group under spokesman Pegg had already registered their name with the District". The name was registered by Vancouver business man (Tim Pegg) himself saying he has been involved as a facilitator in a number of campaign efforts across the Lower Mainland.

Pegg said "The North Vancouver Electors Team (Moulton, Dykeman, Congdon etc) is just a rehash of the old CCA ( Concerned Citizens Association). " They are not an electors team, he said, they are an endorsement team. In

other words they don't get involved in anybody's campaign, they don't run campaigns, they just come out a week before the election and say, "These are the people we've picked that we think you should vote for".

In terms of what criteria his team would be looking for, Pegg said the North Shore Electors Team were calling themselves a moderate group of non-partisan people, because one of their objectives is to keep party politics out of city hall. The people they would support would be moderate people not left of centre people, he said.

But, according to spokesman David Moulton, "The dispute (with Pegg) over the name was an inconvenience, but no grounds for bad blood between the two groups". "His group, he said, "would endorse a full slate of candidates who, once elected, would have access to a research team and would be held accountable for their actions". His group, he said, "was also non-partisan and would, in fact, be taking an active role in campaigning for its chosen candidates, making it somewhat difficult to establish key differences between the two groups", he stated.

So what is the situation from the public's vantage point?. There are several Key Points to remember. First, it is the upcoming community charter which is the clue for the sudden interest by what are essentially pro business parties attempting to seize control of local councils. The first question in politics is, notwithstanding the name of such parties and notwithstanding clichés and platitudes, for whose benefit have those civic parties been formed? What is their objective, and whose interest will they represent? This is totally logical and normal. That the business community should have a say in the affairs of the community is indeed healthy. The question is to what extent? Why now attempt to control Council when in the past, despite scandalous mismanagement of the District, business has been silent more or less?

The CCA, a civic party formed prior to the last election, clearly represented the special interest of a group of homeowners determined NOT to share the waterfront with the rest of the public, even though much of the waterfront belongs to the public.

Much has been said about the freedom which municipalities will soon enjoy as a result of the forthcoming community charter. The truth is that this freedom of the charter is no freedom other than the freedom to embrace business partnerships on terms beneficial to business but not necessarily the public at large. Billboards are but one example. Municipalities are no more free to pursue business partnerships of their own free will than a rock, after it has been thrown, is free to land when and where it will.

If municipalities were truly free, they would be recognized as a legitimate level of government capable of raising taxes other than the property tax.

They would not be forced into such partnerships but would do so only if they so chose. This is the case in all other countries, including in the US where, Cities receive a slice of either the federal or state tax. The community charter offers no such power. Neither is the Federal Government leaning strongly toward such a new deal. This is notwithstanding the platitudes we hear occasionally coming from the mouths of Federal Leaders.

It does not take a rocket scientist to recognize that local politicians will end up as servants of business, mainly large business. That business is taking no chances, in any case, is already clear by the stipulation for support by the local civic parties calling for accountability by the politicians they have helped to elect. The public are destined to lose control over their local government, who in turn are destined to become a mere appendix of corporations. This trend will also inevitably lead to corruption by the civic bureaucracies since they will be even less responsible to their elected leaders than they are now.


It will lead to full scale privatization and will be done in the name of saving taxpayers money. Control of local government by business means large scale development. During elections the public will have no option other than to vote for candidates chosen by business interests for it is they who will be able to afford the glossy brochures, and the expensive ads, as was the case with the CCA during the last election. In the process, the public will lose public recreation facilities, parks will only be accessible via paying a fee, roads will be privatized but all this will result in great opportunities for business. This has been clearly recognized by the business community itself, seeing endless opportunities and is the real reason for the sudden interest in local government.

A case in point is the District of North Vancouver itself where, as a result of gross mismanagement, the pressures for private partnership will be particularly acute.

So what is the alternative for the public whose interests are to maintain livable neighborhoods, free access to parks, affordable public recreation and manageable traffic etc., It is to either form their own civic party with candidates willing to defend the public interest as opposed to candidates responsible to corporations or at least to endorse and/or rate candidates who have a proven pro community record. The stakes for the District are high.

The CCA which represents the special interests of a chosen few will undoubtedly raise its head again, albeit under a different name. This is only prudent for it has been totally discredited - it is time to change the name though not its anti social personality nor its objective - it will not neither give up its anti public waterfront stance nor its billboard mentality. One of its elected chieftains on Council has stated already, that his main objective in the upcoming election is to oust the one Councillor who is the biggest barrier to these CCA objectives.

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