

Subject:**Date:** Mon, 10 Jun 2002 12:14:39 -0700**From:** Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>**To:** "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

A Community strategy for the upcoming municipal election in the District of North Vancouver.

Several civic parties will be vying for control of District Council in the upcoming November election. The appearance of such parties in North Vancouver is a relatively new phenomenon. The reasons have a great deal to do with the last election in November of 1999 when a civic party, the Concerned Citizens Association (CCA), a small but well organized group, seized control of District Council to promote its own special interests.

The CCA demonstrated that, given sufficient resources, a small special interest group can seize control of a whole municipality. The CCA had more than enough resources to realize this goal. To camouflage its true intentions it conducted a campaign of deceit and misinformation. This included misrepresentation of the District waterfront policy. To prevent incursions on public land, the previous Council proposed, over a period of 50 years, to build a public walkway along the waterfront and guarantee public access, threatened, in many cases, by illegal structures.

The CCA frightened the public by stating that a vote for this plan would result in a row of high-rises along the waterfront similar to West Vancouver. What's more it stated, Implantation of the waterfront plan would cost the District taxpayers a staggering 600 million Dollars. This was a fabrication. But the CCA misled the public also in other areas. If elected it claimed the Mayor and Councillors it had endorsed would pursue fiscal responsibility. But the record of the last 3 years is anything but fiscally responsible. The District Heritage Fund has been all but liquidated. Countless millions of infrastructure reserve funds were siphoned off but not to renew the infrastructure but to use for operational expenses. At the same time tax increases in the District in the last 3 years have been the highest ever.


Its pro development bias has been amply demonstrated in the last 3 years. It has pushed through more development variances than during any previous period in the history of the District. This includes variances previous councils denied since they were in violation of existing rules and guidelines to protect the ambience of District neighborhoods. This is especially so in Deep cove from where the CCA drew its support. In short the CCA has done well by the candidates it endorsed during the last election. The CCA will, therefore, want to continue keeping control of Council in one form or another even if it needs to change its name or attempt to enter into alliances with other civic parties to camouflage its true intentions.

Other civic parties too will vie for control of District Council. The introduction of a new Municipal Charter giving municipalities more powers is coming into play. Under the new charter Municipalities will have far greater powers to pursue joint business ventures with the private sector than was previously possible through either the Local Government Act or the Municipal Act which it replaces. Private business has now a far greater stake in ensuring that local Councils are "business friendly". This is especially so in the District with its vast potential for large scale development of which the massive development in the Lynn "Valley Core is but a recent example. Public private partnerships which is at the core of the new Municipal Charter may not be bad in themselves. The question is who makes the decision and for whose benefit.

Several parties are lining up for the stakeout. The days of so called "independent" Councils are a thing of the past. These new parties will have resources that will enable them to conduct campaigns completely out of the reach of so called "independent candidates" of old. The question is how can the public protect itself from this situation? How can the community ensure its interests will be represented? How can it make sure that it will not again fall victim lies and deceit?

The answer lies in FONVCA, the Federation of North Vancouver Community organizations. FONVCA is an independent and non partisan Association. Its aims and objectives, by its very nature, are to maintain the livability of neighborhoods and the community at large. FONVCA by its very nature, is the antidote to special interests. In the last 3 years FONVCA has acted as the District watchdog on every important issue from taxes, to garbage and from traffic to pollution and crime. Without the watchful eye of FONVCA, the harm done by the CCA endorsed Council would have been far more severe then it was. FONVCA has been more than a watchdog. It has made consistent proposals to improve livability and defend the interests of ordinary taxpayers in the District. The result has been that FONVCA has been the target of the CCA endorsed Council since the day it was formed. If the CCA endorsed Council has not succeeded in eliminating FONVCA it is only because FONVCA has the support of the public. FONVCA is the public.

This then is the solution. All progressive elements - all people who want to maintain our North Shore livability all those who are opposed to "Billboards", all who want affordable taxes and all who wish to be shielded from the excesses of a bureaucracy out of reign should support FONVCA. It is the only force capable of maintaining a civic balance. FONVCA needs money and FONVCA needs support. FONVCA is not a political party nor does it have any particular bias. If FONVCA is strong, it will be an important force in the upcoming election and will be able to deal with existing or would be civic parties from a position of strength. During the next election FONVCA need not run a slate of candidates but it should rate old and new candidates based on their track record regardless under what color or party they will be running including those endorsed by the CCA and other civic parties. FONVCA should publish the results of these ratings so the public has a true understanding as to which candidate will represent the true interests of the community and which special interests as the CCA endorsed District Council has done in the last 3 years.

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