

Subject: Re: Code of Ethics

Date: Tue, 16 Dec 2003 16:09:54 -0800

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Mayor Bell <mayorbell@dnv.org>

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Mayor Bell,

I agree entirely with Mr. Andersen's complaint against your (once again) unbalanced application of the prescribed Code of Ethics. At last night's Council meeting, Councillor Nixon launched what was in my view an attack on the dedicated volunteers who served on the planning committee for the Seymour OCP. Beginning with the comment that the committee was not formed through the "grassroots," he went on to say that those people who provided countless hours of their time serving a public cause were merely "survivors" who comprised nothing more than a "special interest group." These derogatory comments were allowed to stand without challenge. Later in the meeting, however, Councillor Crist was forced by you to retract his claim that efforts were made to "sweep the Northlands scandal under the rug." Then shortly after, Councillor Crist was yet again challenged when you deemed a comment he made to be a "slight" against staff. As an observer of the proceedings I was left baffled by the inconsistency of your rulings. This is not the first time I have complained about what appears to be two sets of rules. During the term of the previous Council, this type of thing occurred all too frequently. The Code of Ethics is very clear, and they should be applied evenly and fairly for all members of Council and the public.

Sincerely,
Brian Platts

Eric Andersen wrote:

Mayor Bell,

Does the Code of Ethics no longer apply for Members of Council? I was extremely disappointed last night that you let a member of Council get away with a vicious attack on committee members. This was NOT something said in the heat of the moment, but a well-prepared and well-considered statement.

You will recall that now-defeated Councillor Bill Denault did the same on the previous Council, and considering how you make a special point of always defending staff from attacks from the public, it is EXTREMELY disappointing that you will again let a member of Council denigrate and insult hard-working committee members. One thing is to disagree with the work done over the course of 6 1/2 years. That is a fair comment - no problems there. A completely different thing is to use derogatory and insulting terms as he did - and which you allowed without even calling him to order (I truly wonder if you would have allowed ALL Members of Council to use the same terms).

The time has come, Mayor Bell, for you to decide once and for all whether the Code of Ethics should apply to all (INCLUDING every single Member of Council), or whether this attempt at decorum should plain and simple be given up for lack of enforcement.

I would like to know if you would e.g. allow me to say at a public session that a Member of Council who is, let's say, in the real estate business, is 'self-serving' when/if he votes in favor of more developments in the North Vancouver District.

If your answer is 'NO', I would like to ask why you would let the same Member of Council use those terms when he was referring to a committee that has spent 6 years on a project.

You have always instructed members of the public to present any complaints

to you in writing. This is exactly what I am hereby doing, and I would sincerely hope that you will be kind and courteous enough to respond regarding this most unfortunate incident.

Best regards,

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