

Subject: Fwd: RAV

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From: Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

To: fonvca@fonvca.org

ray@best.bc.ca wrote:

Date: Thu, 26 Jun 2003 16:38:10 -0700 (PDT)

Subject: RAV

From:

To: ,

From this week's Courier.

RAV deal bears ex-city manager's imprint

By Allen Garr VANCOUVER COURIER, June 25, 2003

All RAV roads lead to Ken Dobell. He's the guy who came up with the figure of \$450 million as the expected federal contribution to the project. The province's most powerful public servant has dictated virtually every detail and deadline driving this rapid transit project.

The whole notion that there should be a line tunneling up Cambie Street to the airport and Richmond was his. The idea that it should be built as a public private partnership, a P3, was his. He outlined his grand design just as he was leaving his post as CEO of TransLink to run the provincial government for his pal Premier Gordon Campbell. Their teamwork dates back to the days when Campbell was mayor of Vancouver and Dobell was city manager.

Jane Bird, the woman who heads up the RAV project at \$1,000 a day, was plucked by Dobell from the relative obscurity of a council-appointed planning committee to do a transit task that started her on her career as a transit maven.

The RAV report she produced fit Dobell's vision as he expressed it many months before, right down to the P3 component. Gordon Campbell made it clear to the GVRD that dumping the P3 would be a deal breaker.

The size of the federal contribution, the mysterious \$450 million that appears in documents as far back as the beginning of the RAV line discussion, was his idea.

What is especially Dobell's is the way this RAV deal has been put together so far. As one senior bureaucrat who has watched him work for many years explained, Dobell "jams" people. He puts them in a corner where they're forced-by circumstances he has often created-to come through. The suggestion, as we have seen with the RAV line, is that if you don't make the right decision by the deadline, you will carry the can for blowing the deal.

This approach does not always work and, as we have seen with RAV, it leaves the terrain littered with people who are pissed off at being pushed around.

A notable disaster Dobell had a hand in is the E-Comm centre, a regional facility to deal with emergency coordination for southwest B.C.

All municipalities in the region were supposed to use the facility. There was apparently no consultation with municipalities or the region before this structure was imposed.

I'm told the more Dobell applied the screws, the more the municipal leaders rebelled and refused to join in. A number are still outside the tent. E-Comm, for all its expensive bells and whistles, is considered by the folks who consider these things to be a building and an organization that are totally dysfunctional.

Dobell was also the guy behind that disastrous bit of muscle work known as the vehicle levy, TransLink's attempt to raise funds for transit. Dobell was warned by senior staff at the GVRD the levy would not be an easy sell. He barged in anyway, and after an extremely divisive debate, it squeaked through-only to be turned down by Ujjal Dosanjh and his NDP government. It left TransLink in turmoil and cutting services.

Which brings us back to the \$450 million.

Ottawa has never committed in writing or publicly to this amount. Dobell has been working on the prime minister's main guy, Eddie Goldenberg. Campbell has been lobbying Jean Chretien and has given the impression the money will arrive before the Olympic decision next week.

Now B.C. senior federal minister Herb Dhaliwal has said the feds may be able to come up with \$300 million, matching the province's contribution. Of course cries have gone up that this will kill the \$1.7-billion deal and jeopardize the Olympic bid. And at this point, you can bet that Dobell is advising his boss on how they can "jam" Ottawa into coming up with more.

It won't be pleasant, but it might work.

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