

Subject: Re: 2005-2009 Financial Workshop

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From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

CC: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>, andersen@sagafc.com, Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>, Senior Management Committee <managemcomm@dnv.org>, fonvca@fonvca.org

Dear Councillor Crist,

Just to clarify a minor point, there was one person at least who supported your recent motion on the Recreation Commission. You will recall that I spoke in favour of your motion during the Public Input Period and have also written in support of reorganizing the Rec. Com and putting an end to the District subsidizing the City.

Sincerely,
Brian Platts

Ernie Crist wrote:

Hello Eric:

What Senior staff including James R. were saying during that finance meeting open to the public is that the District will have to sell land as a way out of the quagmire more or less. More development or "infilling" was advocated by Janice H. during the election and Alan N. too has said it repeatedly. The other members of Council may make political hay by saying they are not in favour, but neither have they supported the alternatives proposed by Crist. Under the circumstances Staff is merely providing solutions in line with the existing District culture as it has been for the last twenty years.

While more development and selling more land is only a temporary solution as both you and I know and will have horrendous implications for the community, it is the only way out unless Council changes directions. Neither staff nor Council with the exception of myself, during the meeting dwelt on the solutions I stated however, and why should they? ... Nobody spoke in my support.

Staff may not necessarily care for densification and more development per se but unless changes are made, it is the only option left. The only other option would be to cut services, raise taxes even more dramatically than has been the case and/or make staff cuts which, in any case, this Council is unlikely to do. Neither does the community support reduced level of services albeit they wish for greater efficiency.

The truth is that the Heritage Fund chickens are coming home to roost. The same is true for the Infrastructure Reserve Fund which has been totally eliminated at a time when the infrastructure keeps deteriorating and the costs for its renewal are piling up.

It is not good enough to just criticise Senior Staff. Of course they would prefer to sell land as a solution, however temporary. Not only is it part of the District Culture but it also jives with the Council vibes. It is no accident that just prior to the finance meeting staff presented Council with a report of potential land selling options. Staff said \$ 128 or so million over the next twenty years are needed to fix the aging infrastructure and protect our assets but I can tell you this amount is far too low.

On the side, would it not be nice if Council had allowed the Heritage Fund to be built up as we planned in 1986? Would it not be nice to have five hundred million dollars and maybe more in the Fund by now and just use the annual interests generated to meet our capital requirements? Is it not too bad that this community was silent when this was pointed out to them? Remember when Pat Munroe and I put a thousand dollar ad in the NEWS pointing to the consequences of using large chunks of the Heritage Fund for road patching more or less? Do you know what the response was? It was zilch.

The case for a "fix" via development is not just coming from staff but also comes from Council, albeit it is always mixed with "tears and regrets". Would we not all like to have our cake and eat it too? Of course given the circumstances staff did not pursue the other options I outlined, albeit James R. made some statements which I applauded regarding the Rec Commission. But did you notice that when I said that we should go all the way in terms of dissolving the Commission and end the subsidy to the City, he retreated for the simple reason that he knows Council is not willing to go that far?. Janice H. made a point to advocate the opposite during the election and urge more "Shared Services". Our CAO is very much aware I am sure that when Crist recently made a motion to stop the subsidy to the City it was defeated and there was not a single voice from the community, including from any one of the Community Associations, speaking up in support.

What staff said is that, within the limited options Council wants to go, development is a way out, except they left the word "temporary solution" out which is where I stepped in by pointing to the fallacy of this option if we want to avoid the Surrey Syndrome. Your comments to this effect are bang on. You are also totally right when you state that there is absolutely no evidence that development for development sake will bring benefits. Any development which is not community driven is bad development and that is a fact

However, we are no longer dealing with wishful thinking now but with the harsh reality brought about by 12 years of mismanagement and a community which was silent more or less in the face of it. The issue is no longer densification or no densification, land sales or no land sales to fix our dilemma unless other drastic changes are being made. It was the irresponsible attitude of past Councils plus public apathy which has brought us to this situation albeit individual community associations, (with the exception of Lynn Valley) did fight hard to maintain the liveability of their neighbourhoods. However, in my opinion, the direct connection

between the Heritage Fund and the Infrastructure Reserve Fund and the liveability of neighbourhoods was never fully understood by this community.

As for Council, unless they vote for the changes which I have outlined including the "dissolution" of the Recreation Commission in its present form and ending the subsidy to the City as well as reorganising the Arts Administration just for starters, more land sales plus higher taxes are a given.

The bottom line is that it is time for this community to wake up. It is time for the Community Associations to step beyond the local community plan issue per se. I would say they will have to become "God forbid" more "political. I can assure you that the pro developer elements in the District are very much political already, not to speak of the people using public land on the waterfront.

As for development that is taking place in the District including in Lynn Valley, it is in my opinion archaic, feudal, lacking in imagination and so business poor that it defies imagination. The word modern community planning in which the total community resources are mobilised to achieve development that IS beneficial and adds to the liveability, is something the District appears to have missed. "The Lynn Pedestrian Oriented Town Center" which has given the District nothing but debts and more traffic but no benefits, is a clear example.

Ernie Crist
