

Subject: A reminder that lies have short legs.

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From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: "Agnes Hilsen" <Agnes_Hilsen@dnv.org>, "Alan Nixon" <Alan_Nixon@dnv.org>, "Angila Bains" <Angila_Bains@dnv.org>, "Daina Hibbard" <Daina_Hibbard@dnv.org>, "Dennis Back" <dback@dnv.org>, "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>, "James Ridge" <James_Ridge@dnv.org>, "Janice Harris" <Janice_Harris@dnv.org>, "Jim Cuthbert" <Jim_Cuthbert@dnv.org>, "Kalpna Hayre" <Kalpna_Hayre@dnv.org>, "Lisa Muri" <lisa_muri@dnv.org>, "Maureen Jones" <Maureen_Jones@dnv.org>, "Maureen McKeon Holmes" <Maureen_McKeonHolmes@dnv.org>, "Richard Walton" <richard_walton@dnv.org>, "Shana Burrows" <Shana_Burrows@dnv.org>, "Sue Mitchell" <Sue_Mitchell@dnv.org>

CC: "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

A great deal was made at a District of North Vancouver Council meeting during last summer regarding the application of a Liquor Sale Outlet in the Edgemont Village of the District.

Under the tenure of then Mayor Don Bell, Council had ample opportunity to deal with this issue but failed to do so. District Staff both in 2002 and in 2003 informed Council about upcoming changes in the Municipal Charter, which would warrant zoning changes, should Council wish to prevent liquor outlets in certain areas of the District. But nothing was done.

The result was that a store of this type, despite strong opposition from the public, opened in Edgemont Village in the summer of 2004. In typical fashion District Council squirmed and "Houdinied" after the fact, trying to put the blame for this debacle on the Provincial Government and the LCCB but in vain. Victoria quite correctly pointed out that "we warned you in plenty of time but it appears you took no heed and subsequently we will not intervene in the process. That you failed to do something is your problem".

The next quandary Council found itself in was about the store hours of this new business in Edgemont.

Under the Charter store hours must not be discriminatory against any business. However, Councillor Crist's suggestion was to set the hours of operation in line with the adjacent wine store which closes at 11 pm. Crist stated that no case for discrimination can be made since the only other establishment in the neighbourhood also closes at 11 pm.

However, Council decided to seek a legal opinion. I already know what the solicitor is going to say and I stated so but of course they were not listening anymore than they listened when I made a motion previously which could have prevented this debacle altogether. I brought this matter to Council's attention in July 24, 2003 when, in a motion, I stated that the forthcoming Community Charter will give municipalities far more flexibility in many areas relating to business including setting store hours.

Included in the proposed changes to the Municipal Charter I said was the ability to regulate the hours of business, not only broadly within a municipality, but also for different cases and business operations.

Additionally I stated that certain types of businesses could also have different hours of operation. The Charter will permit the District of North Vancouver to design more flexible regulations, so as to better balance neighbourhood, business and community needs.

In light of this the motion recommended that

1) The Council of the District of North Vancouver follow the example of the District of West Vancouver and send a letter to community groups, including FONVCA and business association groups, as well as the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, to request input regarding the regulation

of Hours of Business in the District of North Vancouver,

2) The City of North Vancouver be invited to do likewise and

3) A copy of the status of District of North Vancouver regulations and policies be forwarded to all relevant associations for their information.

Council failed to do so. However, when the issue blew up, figuratively speaking, Council attempted to put the blame on the Liquor Control Board.

However, much as they abhorred the "heartless Liberal government in Victoria and the even more heartless and inconsiderate LCCB" the fact remains that the District had ample time to act but failed to do so. West Vancouver did. So why did the District of North Vancouver not do its duty in a timely fashion? many people are still wondering.

Ernie Crist



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