

**Subject: Re: Notice Of Motion-setting up a Special Committee to establish criteria to display Art objects in the DNV Municipal Hall and public buildings-Ernie Crist**

**Date:** Sun, 27 Mar 2005 14:03:05 -0800

**From:** Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

**To:** Ernie Crist <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>

**CC:** Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>, Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>, Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>, Senior Management Committee <managecomm@dnv.org>, John McPherson <John\_McPherson@dnv.org>, James Ridge <James\_Ridge@dnv.org>, Nathalie Valdes <Nathalie\_Valdes@dnv.org>, poetic\_licence@hotmail.com, fonvca@fonvca.org

Please see inserted section...

Ernie Crist wrote:

> Dear Dr. Kost:

>

> I think you missed the point. When it comes to Art and what is  
> acceptable and what is not in a public place such as the Municipal Hall,  
> THERE IS NO POLICY. THIS IS PRECISELY THE REASON WHY I AM SUGGESTING  
> THAT WE SET UP a committee so that we CAN establish guidelines to that  
> effect. As it stands now any person can demand the removal of a painting  
> or an art object because he/she finds it offensive. You want standards  
> on Art and morality so spell out what those standards should be.

There are policies that apply to practically everything and everyone at the hall. Cathy Adams has already specified the applicable sections so I will not repeat them here. If you feel the current policies do not apply to art displays then I suggest council simple expand the policies to include them.

>

>

> Speaking on a personal level you have absolutely no idea how offensive I  
> find certain moral matters including for instance gratuitous violence on  
> TV which is resulting in the systematic poisoning of the minds of our  
> youth. I note however, that when I made a motion that we support efforts  
> to combat this corporate sponsored crime against our youth, the  
> community would be art censors were totally silent. But this is merely  
> by the bye.

>

> To go back to the art censoring issue. To have no policy and no  
> guidelines in place is neither fair to Council, to Staff, to the  
> individual Artist nor is it fair to the public at large. Also, I do not  
> see the connection between bylaw officers not enforcing existing bylaws  
> and the display of paintings in the Municipal Hall as you claim.

The analogy is:

while bylaw officers enforce bylaws in the district  
staff enforces policies in place at the hall.

>

>

> It would appear that you also misunderstood the purpose of a committee  
> to make recommendations as to what is appropriate and WHAT IS NOT. To  
> set up such a Committee consisting of a cross section of the community,  
> is not making the Committee responsible as you claim either. It is,  
> however, an opportunity for the community to express an opinion so that  
> Council has an idea what policy to establish.

The community has already expressed its opinions in supporting the existing policies. There appears to be no lack of policies only a lapse in enforcement.

>

>

> Also, there is absolutely no connection between the positive workplace

> policy and hanging a painting in the Hall.

The connection is that some employees at the hall may feel that certain words in print on the painting together with the images are contrary to the positive workplace policy.

> When it comes to ART there  
> can be no violation of that policy unless what constitutes a violation  
> is spelled out first. I am absolutely astonished that this simple fact  
> has escaped the would be censors and the aspiring ART and public  
> morality police.  
>  
> As it now stands do I understand that there may be no further display of  
> nudity of any person on any painting in the Hall and how far does it  
> extend?

The courts have clearly established guidelines on nudity - especially in the context of violence. District policies include upholding those court rulings.

> Does it extend to some parts of the human body, all parts  
> including arms, legs, head etc., I am saying this to make you see what  
> censorship can lead to and how important a policy is. If it is sexual  
> reproductive parts of the human body you don't want to see, then say so.

It seems that gratuitous violence, or the implications thereof, that is the focus of the current issue - not human anatomy.

>  
> If you don't want to see the mammary glands of a human female, then say  
> so. The artist needs to know and I would like to know too. I am  
> certainly not insisting that this should not be the case. It is your  
> building and it is your show. By that I meant it belongs to the public.  
> Personally I could care less.  
>  
> AS for the public, this is public building and the public certainly has  
> a right to express an opinion as to what is appropriate and what is not  
> and to repeat myself this is the reason why such a committee should be  
> set up. Let's have it, Dr. Kost and Mrs Adams.

I see no need of yet another committee. Apply existing policies. If you feel the existing policies are deficient then please point out where.

Yours truly,

Corrie Kost

>  
>  
> Yours truly  
>  
> Ernie Crist  
>  
> -----Original Message-----  
> From: Corrie Kost [<mailto:corrie@kost.ca>]  
> Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2005 11:55 PM  
> To: Ernie Crist  
> Cc: Brian Platts; Elizabeth James; Mayor and Council - DNV; Senior  
> Management Committee; John McPherson; James Ridge; Nathalie Valdes  
> Subject: Re: Notice Of Motion-setting up a Special Committee to  
> establish criteria to display Art objects in the DNV Municipal Hall and  
> public buildings-Ernie Crist  
>  
> Dear Councillor Crist,  
>  
> I think Brian Platts makes an excellent point. We need to simply enforce

> the current policies/guidelines. Like the issue of "public art"  
> contribution by developers not being accessible by the public - there is  
> no need to have a review of that either. Just enforce the existing  
> policies! They are crystal clear.  
>  
> We accuse bylaw officers of not enforcing our bylaws. It seems somewhat  
> hypocritical when that is not taking place closer to home. In any case,  
> committees cannot be made accountable. Only our politicians can be held  
> accountable for not upholding public policy. So I suggest it is they who  
> set the standards - which they do by setting the policies and ensuring  
> they are enforced!  
>  
> Corrie Kost  
>  
> Ernie Crist wrote:  
>  
> > Dear Mr. Platts:  
> >  
> > I don't think it is as simple as that. The Genie is out of the bottle.  
> > You cannot make demands to remove paintings which were an artists  
> > moral take on a social and moral issue because in your opinion they  
> > were not up to someone's standard, and then walk away and leave the  
> > matter hanging. Saying, why can we not use "common sense" and leave  
> > it where it was before, is not good enough anymore. It is too late for  
> > that now.  
> > It is not fair to the Artist, the Arts Community and it is not fair to  
> > Council, to staff and the community at large.  
> >  
> > You people have demanded removal of these paintings so tell the world  
> > why, otherwise Council will be accused of interfering with artistic  
> > expression without debate, censorship without providing reasons etc.  
> > You may well be right and whatever the outcome of the debate, is fine  
> > by me personally. This, as I said, is after all, a public building  
> > and not a museum. Just the same, the community and the artists have  
> > a right to know what is acceptable and what is not.  
> >  
> > In any case, I think that such a debate will be fruitful and quite  
> > frankly is long overdue. It may well clear the air and expose all  
> > kinds of cobwebs. It may well be an education for some. Also, let's  
> > find out what the standards of "morality" in this community really  
> > are.  
> >  
> > Cheers,  
> >  
> > Ernie Crist  
> >  
> > \_\_\_\_\_  
> >  
> > From: Brian Platts [<mailto:bplatts@shaw.ca>]  
> > Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2005 5:44 PM  
> > To: Ernie Crist  
> > Cc: Elizabeth James; Mayor and Council - DNV; Senior Management  
> > Committee; John McPherson; James Ridge; Nathalie Valdes  
> > Subject: Re: Notice Of Motion-setting up a Special Committee to  
> > establish criteria to display Art objects in the DNV Municipal Hall  
> > and public buildings-Ernie Crist  
> >  
> > Dear Councillor Crist:  
> >  
> > After much consideration I am not sure that I can support your motion.  
> > It bothers me that we have come to this point after so many years of  
> > successful art work displays within the District Hall. As far as I  
> > know this is the only time when there has been any controversy. (I

> > should note that Mrs. Adams was not the only one to complain in this  
> instance.  
> > I did too, and so did others.)  
> >  
> > In my view, it should never have got to this point because common  
> > sense should have prevailed with those involved realizing that such  
> > material was obviously not appropriate for display in the Hall. As  
> > Mrs. Adams clearly established, the material in question even violates  
>  
> > specific sections of the District's Corporate Policy Manual. This is  
> > not a subjective analysis in any way.  
> >  
> > I am frustrated that because of this one instance of poor judgement,  
> > we must now form a committee to debate "good art" from "bad art". I  
> > think everyone welcomes the the opportunity for local artists to  
> > display their work within the District Hall. Why can't the NV  
> > Community Arts Council simply learn from this episode and strive to be  
>  
> > more sensitive in the future? I don't think we need to blow this whole  
>  
> > thing out of proportion.  
> >  
> > Sincerely,  
> > Brian Platts  
> >  
> > Ernie Crist wrote:  
> >  
> >       Dear Ms James;  
> >  
> >       Look at the bright side. It will provide the community with an  
>  
> > opportunity to debate the difference between "good art" "bad art",  
> > and "acceptable art", acceptable that is to the majority of the  
> > public at this time. The only comment I have is that the human body,  
> > including the female body, is ugly or beautiful depending on the eye  
> > of the beholder only and no more so than is the case with a horse or a  
>  
> > goat by way of example.  
> >  
> >       The posterior of the horse and the goat serve the same purpose  
>  
> > as those of a human and are being drawn by artists without opposition  
> > and public outcry. Is it a question of inherited prejudice, cultural  
> > taboos and Zeitgeist biases that have their origin in social and  
> > cultural needs and values of the time ? And what if these needs and  
> > values change as was the case yesterday, today and tomorrow? Why is  
> > it one might ask that a person finds nothing wrong with looking at a  
> > horse's posterior in real life or when depicted in a painting but has  
> > problems with that of a human?  
> >  
> >       Also why is it that nudity is acceptable in a nudist colony  
> > and if seen through an "almost" bathing suit but not on a painting. I  
> > am just asking a question.  
> >  
> >       As one man said "let a hundred flowers bloom and a thousand  
> > thoughts contend". I know what I think but I am looking forward to  
> > this one, if for no other reason than listening to the rationale of  
> > the participants.  
> >  
> >       Yours truly,  
> >  
> >       Ernie Crist.  
> >  
> > \_\_\_\_\_  
> >

> > From: Elizabeth James [<mailto:cagebc@yahoo.com>]  
> > Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2005 7:52 AM  
> > To: Ernie Crist; Mayor and Council - DNV; John McPherson;  
> > Senior Management Committee; James Ridge; Nathalie Valdes  
> > Cc: Cathy Adams; Brian Plattts; Corrie Kost  
> > Subject: Re: Notice Of Motion-setting up a Special Committee  
> > to establish criteria to display Art objects in the DNV Municipal Hall  
>  
> > and public buildings-Ernie Crist  
> >

> > 23 March 2005

> > Dear Clr. Crist:

> > It is with some reluctance that I support this idea.

> > Reluctant because I find it sad that, as with the policy on a  
> > positive workplace environment, it appears that appropriate behaviour,  
>  
> > or appropriate artwork for that environment cannot be decided without  
> > a piece of paper in hand to describe.

> > I am also disappointed that female members of the Arts group  
> > would place the interests of avant garde artistic freedom, ahead of  
> > respect for the female person as a potential viewer. Is it any wonder  
> > we have a problem with continuing violence against women? There's an  
> > axiom abroad that goes something like this: If one wishes to have the  
> > respect of others, one must first respect oneself.

> > Sincerely,  
> > Liz James

> > Ernie Crist <[ernie\\_crist@dnv.org](mailto:ernie_crist@dnv.org)> <[mailto:ernie\\_crist@dnv.org](mailto:ernie_crist@dnv.org)>  
> > wrote:

> > Notice of Motion - To establish a Special Committee of  
>  
> > Council to establish criteria for the display of art objects in the  
> > Municipal Hall and in other Municipal Public Buildings in the  
> > District of North Vancouver - Report Councillor Crist.

> > Whereas paintings by one particular artist recently  
> > displayed in the District Hall resulted in complaints primarily from  
> > one person who found these paintings offensive and unsuitable to be  
> > exhibited in a public building and

> > Whereas the suitability of paintings and other Art  
> > objects to be displayed in the Municipal Hall is based on subjective  
> > criteria (beauty is in the eyes of the beholder) and

> > Whereas on the other hand the Municipal Hall is a  
> > public place where criteria of suitability are not necessarily  
> > determined by artistic merit but by subjective factors determined on  
> > what is considered "Main Flow Art" and is acceptable to the majority  
> > of people

> > Therefore be it resolved that Council set up a Special  
>  
> > Committee consisting of one representative of Council, one  
> > representatives of the Arts Council, one representative of the North  
> > Vancouver Arts Commission, one District Staff member to be appointed  
> > by the Municipal Manager or the Municipal Manager himself, two  
> > representatives of FONVCA and one representative of the Arts  
> > Department of Capilano College and further be it resolved

> >  
> >                   That this Special Committee be requested to establish  
> > criteria and guidelines as to what is suitable to be exhibited in the  
> > Municipal Hall as well as in other Municipally owned Public Buildings  
>  
> > in the District of North Vancouver and further be it resolved  
> >  
> >                   That this Special Committee return recommendations to  
> > this effect to District Council by no later than June 15,2005 and  
> > further be it resolved  
> >  
> >                   That the City of North Vancouver be invited to send an  
>  
> > observer to the meetings of this Special Committee and further be it  
> > resolved  
> >  
> >                   That the paintings currently exhibited in the  
> > Municipal Hall which in the opinion of this one person are unsuitable  
>  
> > to be displayed in the Municipal Hall be removed until such time when  
>  
> > the report from this Special Committee is returned to Council and a  
> > decision pertaining to this issue has been made.  
> >  
> >                   Send instant messages to your online friends  
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> >                   Name: winmail.dat  
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> >                   Encoding: base64

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>                   Name: winmail.dat  
> winmail.dat    Type: application/ms-tnef  
>                   Encoding: base64

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Corrie Kost <[kost@triumf.ca](mailto:kost@triumf.ca)>