

Subject:**Date:** Thu, 31 Mar 2005 10:21:52 -0800**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>**To:** <info@thefulcrumproject.org>, "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, "James Ridge" <James_Ridge@dnv.org>, <Newtonr@cdnv.org>**CC:** <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>, "Poetic" <licence@hotmail.com>, <m.bragg@shaw.ca>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

Never criticise a volunteer group who attempt to do good work. This is the golden rule which every citizen but especially politicians should keep in mind. I too will keep this in mind as I am writing the comments below.

However, I must say I am shaking my head once again in disbelief as I read that a group like the "Fulcrum Project" has not invited a single local government representative to its "Breaking Free", A Community Discussion on Poverty being held at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre on Saturday April 2,05.

In the advertising sent out by this group, not a single mention is made as far as I can determine where the Centre is located (is it in North Van?) and the list of speakers does not contain a single representative of local government.

On the other hand the poor of Canada, the homeless of Canada, the underprivileged children of Canada, live not in Canada per se but in the Communities of Canada. It is in these Communities where the problems exist. Local governments, are in the frontline of the social, economic and environmental battle of this present day society. It is they who are the victims of downloading and it is they who are being asked to pick up the slack after senior levels of government have opted out and left a mess as was the case after the Campbell Liberals in Victoria put mentally ill people on the streets.

But the organisers of such events virtually ignore local governments except when it comes to asking for money during budget meetings. They do this of course to fight the worst problems - the result of the archaic and right wing business agenda of the Campbell Liberals. But these anti poverty groups and their allies never become active during local elections. In this case they did not even invite any local government representative to their forum.

This particular event representing several community sectors according to the advertising sent out by the "Fulcrum Project" - an organisation to raise awareness and personalize poverty and identify provincial policies that contribute to poverty, will speak to the challenges they have faced, and will explore action plans to bring poverty issues to the forefront of the provincial election, so the pamphlet states.

However, no mention is made of the role local government is playing in all this. Not a single speaker has been invited to represent the view of local government. Clearly it still has not sunk in that the problems they are talking about and hope to address are not taking place in Canada where close to 90% of Canadians happen to live and under the jurisdiction of local government.

The peculiar attitude by these reform groups explains why during municipal elections the voter turnout is so abysmal, it explains why with the exception of big cities such as Vancouver there are no progressive civic parties. It explains why the field is left entirely to the political forces representing special interests and other civic anti social reform parties.

In North Vancouver where the District of North Vancouver owns waterfront property and set up a Task Force to guarantee access for the public to

enjoy, a special interest civic party was set up by way of example to prevent this and insure that the waterfront remains the privilege of adjoining home owners even though the land belongs to the public. Not even a murmur was heard from any of the anti poverty groups who are mentioned in the list of contributors to this event. Neither did any of them ever show up before Council when motions on housing, transportation, recreation or any of the other issues of crucial importance came before Council.

Ernie Crist



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