

**Subject: Re: Councillor Ernie Crist and Mt. Fromme**

**Date:** Thu, 10 Feb 2005 01:18:32 +0000 (GMT)

**From:** Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

**To:** Andrew Hamilton <hamila2@spu.edu>, "Clr. Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>, Mayor and Council <council@dnv.org>

**CC:** fonvca@fonvca.org

9 February 2005

Dear Andrew Hamilton:

Many of the emails concerning the issue of mountain-bike trails which are being received by Council of the District of North Vancouver, are being copied to community associations and other interested residents for their information. In this regard, I have received a copy of your own email on the subject.

First of all, I should say that your favourable comments about our community are much appreciated. Those of us who live here realize how fortunate we are to do so - and we recognize that we have a serious responsibility to protect its ambience and its ecology, and to balance those interests against the recreational opportunities our surroundings offer.

It is for this reason that wide-ranging discussion has been underway for well over a year now as to whether or not the healthy sport of mountain-biking should be given free rein on our local hillsides, or whether such use should be curtailed or, as has been the case in many other communities, the sport should be banned from North Vancouver slopes, in favour of assigning it a more appropriate location.

As someone who, on the whole, has been regarded as "right-wing" and a supporter of things entrepreneurial, I must say that, on the current issue, I come down unequivocally on the side of the environment. For me, this is not a NIMBY issue. Most who live in this community are happy to welcome a sharing of our surroundings with any and all who appreciate it for what it is - an incredibly beautiful, natural environment which is home, not only to the human beings who live here but, also, to numerous species of flora and fauna which are either unique to this area or which, in general, are diminishing in numbers due to inappropriate human development and/or overuse.

The questions that must be asked of, and answered, by the current Alpine Strategic Study need to settle, once and for all, what types of activities and development should take place within our boundaries, and where.

In the past few years, there has been an increased awareness of the conflicts that are arising in many communities from continued growth, automobile traffic and, now, an need for enhanced recreational opportunities for the density of populations we have encouraged by government decisions, decisions which have often been made with one eye on government's unending need for additional tax dollars to support services.

Much has been made of the economic benefits offered to our community which devolve from mountain-biking and, indeed, from continued development. Unfortunately for those who wish to see unfettered access to North Shore mountains - whether for bike trails, dog-walking or increased urban development - local residents have come to realize that our five municipalities have lagged behind most others in the region, when it comes to protecting our natural environment. Further, BC taxpayers have faced severe cuts in social and healthcare services, and in dollars for education, infrastructure and transportation projects. You may understand therefore, why it is they are more than a little upset at one suggestion by the District that it is considering spending almost a million dollars on two parking lots and a sidewalk to avert the problems being caused by some mountain bikers.

Mountain-biking is not the first such issue. The last one was a need to spend thousands of dollars on two skate-boarding facilities to avert the dangers imposed by out-of-control boarders on city streets and sidewalks. "If only we had a place for our sport....." was the cry. Well, unhelmeted young people on the way to the newly-built facilities, still do it on the sidewalks and roadways.

There is a good reason why the activities of mountain-bikers and multi-animal dog walkers are beginning to be curtailed - not just in this region but in Europe and many areas of North America including, probably, your own Washington State. It is because citizens have come to realize that those activities often are incompatible with the continued health and existence of the very environment that makes it attractive to those who would use it.

No-one on Council is trying to entirely ban the sport of mountain-biking in the Region. To emphasize: A complete ban was never suggested by Clr. Crist. What Council is trying to do is make sure that the sport happens in areas which are appropriate to the type of wear and tear that the sport imposes. Our citizens have the right to expect that of their governments.

Perhaps it is unfortunate that the main trigger for the Alpine Strategic Study requisitioned by District Council, was the vandalizing behaviour of what is claimed to be a minority of mountain bikers, because the issue has become much larger than that. On that point alone, though, did you know that said vandals ride across private property, break down shrubbery, use hedges as bathroom facilities, strip down to the buff to change their clothes on private property [despite the presence of summertime afternoon guests], take up all available residential and guest street parking - and that's before they illegally build ramps and hazards on taxpayer-owned property, or gouge muddy swaths through wet trails heedless of the ecology.

What used to be considered forest use privileges are now regarded, it seems, the 'sweet' rights to trespass and defile property that belongs to all

citizens - present and future. In fact, even the word 'belong' is inappropriate because the land is only under 'stewardship' to be protected for present thoughtful enjoyment, and for passing on intact to future generations.

Thankfully, the attempts of Council to prevent those problems on one mountain ecosystem have led to an expanded discussion as to how North Shore communities in general should be working, not just for the short term but to protect the area for future generations. One thing is for sure, if Council were to bend to the wishes of local, national and international mountain-biking and/or dog-walking groups and allow unfettered access to Fromme and other mountain slopes, it would not be much more than five years before the sheer numbers of users had virtually destroyed that irreplaceable environment and moved on to new pastures.

My bottom line? The benefits of the 'economy' dollar matter little if the quality of my surroundings have been trashed in its gain. One final, difficult, word: Were the residents of North and West Vancouver to 'swarm' sensitive areas of other municipalities or countries, in the name of creating local profits, what should we expect to be the reaction from tax-apaying residents? My guess is that we'd be dealt with in short order, in no uncertain terms.....and so it should be.

In summary: North Shore mountains are for the enduring enjoyment of all - including natural species. We very much appreciate the opportunities we have to offer guests a warm welcome to our home - but our citizens wish to have that home respected in the process. Tourism dollars are, indeed, valued - but not at the cost of our environment. Lastly, my guess is that North Vancouver residents are like most other Canadians, in that they wish to hold sway over their own decisions; we have enough trouble keeping our own governments in check, without needing to feel that we must pull out the handkerchief every time a resident from another jurisdiction sneezes.

Sincerely,  
Liz James

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

-----Original Message-----

From: Mayor Harris  
Sent: Wednesday, February 09, 2005 8:56 AM  
To: Andrew Hamilton  
Cc: Mayor and Council - DNV  
Subject: RE: Councillor Ernie Crist and Mt. Fromme

Thank you for your email regarding mountain biking on Mt. Fromme. For your information this issue is still in active discussion. I am anticipating that after the workshop the Alpine Strategic Plan will be returned to a Council meeting and a formal decision will be made at that time. Dates of meetings are advertised every Friday in our "District Dialogue" in the North Shore News.

I am forwarding your email to other members of Council for their information.

Mayor Janice Harris

-----Original Message-----

From: Andrew Hamilton [<mailto:hamila2@spu.edu>]  
Sent: Tuesday, February 08, 2005 8:31 PM  
To: Mayor Harris  
Subject: Councillor Ernie Crist and Mt. Fromme

Hi,  
This is in response to concern over the closing of Mt. Fromme to mountain bikers. For me, Mt. Fromme and the rest of the North Shore is a

safe-haven for biking. I live in Washington and I see so many rules and restrictions being placed on local biking areas that they are no longer appealing. The North Shore is a huge attraction from across the boarder. Also, the community on the North Shore is incredible. It is a very engaging community, and as with all biking communities we share a common bond and love for the sport of mountain biking, whether it be cross country, freeriding, or downhill racing. To close of the North Shore, or just Mt. Fromme, would take a huge chink out of the local community and to the mountain biking world, as the North Shore is almost a place of legend among our peers. Please consider this before acting.  
Much thanks,  
Andrew Hamilton

---

[ALL-NEW Yahoo! Messenger](#) - all new features - even more fun!