

Subject: [Fwd: DNV Taxes]
From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>
Date: Mon, 31 Jul 2006 12:30:55 -0700
To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: DNV Taxes
From: Wendy Qureshi <qureshi28@shaw.ca>
Date: Mon, 31 Jul 2006 12:24:49 -0700
To: fonvca@fonvca.org

Dear Editor,

Congratulations to the North Shore News for the enlightening story about District taxes. A special bouquet to Dr. Corrie Kost for once again pointing out that District taxes have risen more than the average taxes in the region while services, with the exception of fire and police, have steadily declined. Even a casual observer will have noticed that the maintenance of roads in the District leaves much to be desired and that recreational facilities are badly in need of repairs.

What has not been mentioned is that while District taxes have risen dramatically, this is not the whole story. In addition to the above-average increases, the District has used up hundreds of millions of dollars from land sales and land lease money, and contrary to what the taxpayers have been told, the majority of these monies have not been used for capital projects as was planned when the District Heritage Fund was established in 1986.

It was Dr. Kost himself, in his usual diligence and insight, who has pointed out repeatedly that the real tax increases were not in the neighbourhood of 6 percent, but in the neighbourhood of 8 to 12 percent annually. The difference was made up by "selling the farm" and now the chickens are coming home to roost. What might come as a surprise is the remark that the infrastructure has steadily deteriorated as well. Surprise because the Infrastructure Reserve Fund, which was set up in the early 80s, stood at \$91 Million in 1997. These funds too were used as a slush fund to cover general incompetence, rather than to renew the infrastructure for which these funds were intended.

Your reporter made the remark that the District Heritage Fund sits as a "comfortable" \$23 Million. In reality that fund, as already mentioned, is a small fraction of what it should be, had it not been used as a slush fund. A typical example is the Lynn Valley Library and Community Centre. The money was in place. Instead the District Council chose to go to the public for an additional loan. What is more, the 80,000 sq. ft. library and community centre was scaled down under the pretext that the building would be too high if it also contained the 40,000 sq. ft. community space. The library community centre was reduced from 80,000 sq. ft to 40,000 sq. ft, which means that it is a library only, while the cost has gone from \$21 Million to close to \$40 Million.

The bottom line is that the District has been mismanaged. What is more serious is that the District taxpayers not only did not hold the culprits accountable, but rewarded them by electing them to higher office. We truly deserve the government we have.

Ernie Crist
Wendy Qureshi
North Vancouver

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