

Subject: [Fwd: Silent majority must wake up!]
From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>
Date: Wed, 10 Oct 2007 15:53:50 -0700
To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: Silent majority must wake up!
From: Monica Craver <mecraver@shaw.ca>
Date: Wed, 10 Oct 2007 15:42:15 -0700
To: fonvca@fonvca.org

An excellent letter in today's North Shore News. (Let's not forget what is happening to our beautiful North Shore temperate rain forests due to indiscriminate recreational development and overuse by off-road vehicles. This is adding undue pressures to the forests, already affected by climate change.)

Silent majority must wake up

North Shore News

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Dear Editor:

Bravo to the author of the letter Let's Envision the Future We Want for West Van (North Shore News, Sept. 28). It was undoubtedly the most important one in recent history.

However, it should have been addressed to every citizen from Horseshoe Bay to Deep Cove because it applies to the entire North Shore community. Our corner of the Lower Mainland is being dramatically changed by local politicians, their staff and by developers. I repeat McIlwraith's key question: "Is it what the rest of us want?"

The problem, of course, is how to wake up that huge silent majority of people who call the North Shore home. They don't vote, they don't participate or speak out on civic affairs. In 15 to 20 years "home" will be unrecognizable. Density and global warming have rendered our present official community plans obsolete. It's obvious how the politicians and developers envision our future, but what do the rest of us want? Now is the time to let our local council representatives know how we feel. Next year could be too late.

Joan Peters, North Vancouver

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In response to this letter:

Let's envision the future we want for West Van

North Shore News

Friday, September 28, 2007

Dear Editor:

Cities, like people, have pivotal moments which can go unrecognized until it is too late. Moments when we have choices we may not even realize are critical, when the decisions we make are irreversible and take us one way or another but never back. I suspect West Vancouver is at that point today.

Today we have a choice about what we want West Vancouver to become. The choice may have been forced upon us or perhaps we demanded it, but we do have to choose. What sort of place will West Vancouver, in the 21st century, become?

A model is being presented to us. I believe the city is being manoeuvred toward a particular model, and I can most easily identify that model as Newport Beach, Calif. Newport Beach is a wealthy city, on the ocean, clean -- so clean it appears sanitized -- ribboned with concrete sidewalks, festooned with marinas, expensive restaurants, chic shops, exclusive clubs and peopled with the rich and the beautiful citizens of Orange County.

Pedestrians and dogs are rarely seen, except when they are tipping the valet parking attendant, sprawling indolently on the deck of a private yacht or peeking out of the side window of a Mercedes Benz. Movie stars live in Newport Beach, as do investment bankers, world famous novelists and real estate tycoons. Newport Beach is the pot at the end of many rainbows. Is it ours?

Another choice, given much less fanfare and ignored or denigrated by our elected officials, is for West Vancouver to go along more or less as we have enjoyed it in the past. Tolerant, sometimes a little sloppy, a city where old ladies push their scooters and children drip melted ice cream. Where sometimes we have to step around dog poop or pick it up, where dogs do bark, neighbours section off parts of a beach for family fun with Rover and Fluffy, and where life is lived slightly out of focus sometimes, but it is lived more or less freely. Where people can complain, but then just let it go. A neighbour, not a development.

This requires each of us deciding for ourselves what we really want from the place we live. Our mayor and council have said what they want, what I expect their friends want, and what they believe we should have. Immaculate, dog free, high concept, high profit Ambleside and Dundarave: a district where you can walk, but without your dogs; a district with beautiful parks where you can have a delightful dinner with friends, or enjoy a latte in every block.

Just don't try to order a hotdog or burger with an ice-cream cone on the beach. They see the future their way and so far, they are going their way with our city. The question is: Is this what the rest of us want?

Does West Vancouver have to change? Sure, we will change one way or another.

We are changing every time we build a new highrise, a new medical clinic, elect a new mayor or organize another protest. The question becomes how do we manage the change. What do we, who live here, really want our district to become? We have to decide or the decision will be made for us. Perhaps it already has. But if it is important to us, we can change direction again.

Dixie McIlwraith, West Vancouver

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