

Good evening Mr. Mayor, councillors, friends and neighbours

Thanks kindly to everyone here tonight for taking the time to consider this proposal. I am sorry I cannot be here in person but am away on pressing family business.

I do not have a huge amount to say this evening, and I will keep my comments short.

I would however like to offer my full support for the Co:Here project and my enthusiastic backing for their work. I sincerely hope that this council will approve the proposal and think it crucial for the health of our neighbourhood.

My partner and I moved to Grandview-Woodland in 1991 and have lived here as renters for our whole adult lives: 21 years. We have raised two daughters on Salsbury Drive, ^{adopted} a number of neighbourhood kids, run a small community school, built an intercultural exchange program for East Vancouver teens, continue to put on regular community potlucks in Victoria Park, have both served several terms on the Grandview Woodland Neighbourhood Council and have been deeply involved in the neighbourhood for two decades.

Beyond that I am a founder of Car Free Commercial Drive and Car Free Vancouver Day. I am also the founder and continue to serve as a director of the Purple Thistle Centre – an arts and activist centre in the neighbourhood that serves several hundred primarily low-income youth. I have written extensively about the neighbourhood, including my last book which focused on East Vancouver and was shortlisted for the City of Vancouver book prize, *Common Ground in a Liquid City: Essays in Defence of an Urban Future*. I am also currently a lecturer in the ~~SFU Urban Studies~~ department. Listening to my resume is a bore, but I would like to think that it underlines the depth of my commitment to this neighbourhood.

I have been happy and honoured to commit two decades of work to the Commercial Drive community because it is a neighbourhood that continues to inspire me with its activist generosity, its hospitality, its ability to welcome all kinds of people and its commitment to social justice. Ours is a neighbourhood that is much more than tolerant of difference: we actively seek it out.

Matt Hern
Submitted as
Correspondence

I am not a Christian and do not have any particular affinity for faith-based work, but over my time living on Salsbury Drive I have been consistently impressed with the commitment of the Grandview Baptist Church to our community and especially their ability to connect with low-income and homeless citizens. This is clearly an organization that walks their talk and has been inspiring in their compassion.

The City of Vancouver is in a well-documented housing crisis: we need as many solutions and initiatives as possible to combat the malaises of unaffordability, homelessness, houselessness and all the social and cultural ills that economic exclusivity and wealth disparities create.

We cannot retreat into small-heartedness, NIMBYism, or parochialism. We cannot close up the gates to our castle and take care of only ourselves. We cannot retreat into the pettiness of desperately trying to protect our property values and somehow fix the community in a cloak of nostalgia. This neighbourhood is better than that and has always been better than that.

Our community is constantly changing, constantly evolving and thank goodness for that. We need our neighbourhood to be able to meet new challenges. And the overwhelming challenge facing us is housing. If we cannot house all of our citizens, if Grandview Woodland cannot provide affordable homes for everyone, if this neighbourhood becomes exclusive and governed by the self-interest of homeowners we will cease to be the brilliant, diverse, compassionate neighbourhood that has inspired and sheltered so many of us for so long.

Ours is a neighbourhood that has to welcome difference, has to welcome those who are not like ourselves. We have to actively seek ways to include everyone – especially folks with low-incomes – into the everyday life of our community. The Co:Here project is a wonderful example of hospitality: an independent project that speaks to the best of our community. This is not about a floor here or there, a façade or an architectural quibbles. This project is an argument for our community to live up to its honourable history. This neighbourhood is a generous, welcoming place that takes care of everyone and Co:Here is going a long ways toward making those ideals reality. I urge council to support this terrific project.

Thanks very much for your time.

From: Steve Richardson s. 22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2012 8:13 PM
To: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Subject: Rezoning: 1870 east 1st avenue & 1723 Victoria drive

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing in support of the rezoning application for the property at 1870 east 1st avenue & 1723 Victoria drive. My wife and I and 10 month old son are residents of the Grandview Woodlands neighborhood. As this proposed development is in the area where we live it will shape the environment where we raise our son Eli. We both value a community that is diverse and desire to have our son grow up in a place where his neighbors include those who are economically marginalized. Making a place for those people by approving this rezoning application would be a sign that this city is indeed willing to make a place for those who often find themselves without or pushed to the margins of our city. I would implore you Mr Mayor and Council to approve this application for rezoning.

Sincerely,

Stephen Richardson
s. 22(1) Personal and Confidential

Sent from my iPhone