

Kennett, Bonnie

From: Andrew_sauder s.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 3:20 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: Written personal statement for October 17th's public hearing

Categories: Red Category

Dear City Council,

I have one question, and then a comment about a poisoned democratic process.

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Q:

According to the published documents, Community Activity Center is a specialized term. Indeed the city retains the right to purchase the Community Activity Center for \$10 if the public loses access.

There is zero description of what the Community Activity Center represents. Is that a way of saying people can purchase event tickets, which they already do. Is this a serious policy? Will every bar and coffee shop with an open mic get the same opportunity for free money? And how much money are we talking about? The city has literally made it impossible for citizens to judge if this represents good value when they have no idea what they are paying for, or how much they are paying for a Community Activity Center.

One letter in support was clearly led to believe it's a new Kerrisdale Community Center, but the floor plans have no space for a gym, library, or rec room.

Whoever let this slip by is supposed to be a communication professional. How do you expect the public to voice an opinion if there is a failure to communicate any common understanding of the matter at hand?

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I just finished reading through the hearing's written statements thus far. The funny thing is that by and large the 'opposed' and 'supporting' categories don't exhibit a lot of contradiction.

By and large everyone is in favor of increased density through general rezonings, and no one likes the current system that is seen as unresponsive and inequitable. I can agree to that.

Before continuing, I must point out some necessary housekeeping. A single submitter, abundanthousingvancouver.com, is responsible for 35 letters in support.

1. This can't be allowed. The city makes itself directly accessible.
2. There is no assurance that any submissions through abundanthousingvancouver.com are not deleted, modified, or created by a single person.
3. By keeping interested parties off the city website, it is hiding the actual proposal and supporting documentation necessary for an informed opinion.
4. By controlling the entire solicitation, there is a danger of lying and manipulation without any public record of the act.

You see, I've been working in San Francisco for the last few years. I grew up in Vancouver, do visit often, and follow some of its news.

In June 2016 a man named Bob Rennie was in the news saying Vancouver developers should copy the San Francisco developer lobbying group Yes In My Backyard. The Y.I.M.B.Y. activity in SF is theatrical nonsense, it's staged to destroy any public trust and reduce everyone to yelling past each other. The goal being that the crisis deepens, honest citizens are exhausted, and Y.I.M.B.Y. can seize the initiative a la Naomi Klein Shock Doctrine. Sure enough, Vancouver had a Y.I.M.B.Y.YVR and a AbundantHousingYVR in July 2016.

In November 2016, myself and many others reconsidered moving back to Canada.

In February 2017 Vancouver was again in the SF headlines when a man named Peter Wall was celebrating Donald Trump's election at the opening of Vancouver's Trump tower.

Then after 8 months of relative inactivity, the Y.I.M.B.Y.YVR and AbundantHousingYVR started spamming social media trying to galvanize support for this Ryerson United Redevelopment proposal using Donald Trump internet tactics.

So that's how I became interested in this project from 1500km away.

Of the submissions made to publichearing@vancouver.ca so far:
35/56 are by AbundantHousingVancouver.com

Cleaning up the submissions then leaves:

13/22 are by individuals who self-identify as attending Ryerson Church

5/22 are individuals who have no connection, but heard about the proposal and submitted directly to City Hall

2/22 are public figures returning favors by making extremely generic shows of support

1/22 lives in the neighborhood

The Church attendees are in favor of maximal monetary gains, and minimal responsibilities -- that's why they submitted the application. Including the one supporter from the neighborhood who doesn't self-identify as attending, they want to see needed maintenance done but it is not explained that they need the money from City Hall, how much it will cost, and how much they already have saved.

The submissions categorized as opposing the project are likewise predictable. They want to see a fair process where the proposal is evaluated in line with precedents and common expectation, just as they would hope to be treated themselves.

Mutual needs, the golden rule. Why or how has the City of Vancouver made this so difficult? Politics are supposed to left for policy and elections, but it has clearly intruded into the process.

If you do not permit PR professionals to pollute the public discourse, everyone can stop yelling, and progress can be made.

Or you can let this cancer grow, destroy public trust, and make a lot of regrettable decisions in the heat of the moment.

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