



# Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners' Association

“Working to enhance the value and quality of living in historic Shaughnessy”

“保護及改善桑尼斯區的歷史，物業價值，以及生活品質”

## Fall 2013 Newsletter - 2013年秋季通訊

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Last year's fall newsletter was devoted to how the City's rezoning plan would likely affect Shaughnessy residents. In the intervening year, there have been confrontations between community groups and City Hall over many issues from rezoning to ill-positioned bike paths. The SHPOA Board has voted that SHPOA join the "Coalition of Vancouver Communities", whose mission statement is: "To create a new development/planning paradigm that will stress community involvement and local influence over land use and zoning decisions." Nineteen Vancouver neighbourhoods have also joined this non-political coalition. In this issue we have two insightful articles from residents, who are also SHPOA board members and who attend many meetings and take a keen interest in maintaining the livability of our wonderful city. Please also visit [shpoa.ca](http://shpoa.ca) for information.

### City Hall Dictatorship?

Twenty years ago, in June 1993, over 4,500 Vancouver citizens participated in "City Plan", round table discussion groups that yielded 3000 ideas and solutions to make Vancouver a more livable city. City staff pared these ideas to 1500 and "Ideas Days" were held where over 10,000 people prioritized the ideas and, from this, emerged Vancouver's "Liveable Context Statement", an official development plan for Vancouver. Over 100,000 citizens participated, representing 40% of single family households, with 82% agreeing that development was necessary but that it must be balanced with new services. Community plans were initiated in collaboration with city planners, directed by a council who wanted to hear new ideas from new people and not from a staff proposal. Council led and they listened to the people who really mattered, grass roots citizens "who love where they live".

In 2006, NPA Mayor Sam Sullivan coined the term "EcoDensity" and, in a public statement, unilaterally outlined his personal plan for Vancouver. There was a sense, at that time, that many dedicated, tireless citizens had wasted countless volunteer hours on community plans that were being disregarded.

In 2008, the resulting furor over EcoDensity lost the election for Sam Sullivan and the NPA. Vision, led by Gregor Roberston, was elected by a 30% voter turnout, the lowest in 50 years. In his first year in office Mayor Robertson placed Vancouver on the hook for 1.1 billion dollars for the Olympic Village. In an attempt to solve homelessness and mitigate a 62 million dollar deficit, he raised taxes, laid-off staff, and cut services. He also rebranded Vancouver as the "Green Capital". Vision, elected on a promise to reconsider Ecodensity, followed with Vancouver "Greenest Cities Action Plan" that includes many EcoDensity proposals.

Norquay Village is an example of an Eco Density plan (see <http://eyeonnorquay.wordpress.com/>) where, in 2010, Vancouver Council approved in principle the mass rezoning of 1900 single family properties, despite widespread neighbourhood opposition. In spite of all of these things, the 2011 municipal election saw Vision re-elected. Once again the voter turnout was very low, a mere 34%.

On October 3rd 2012, Vancouver City Council voted to accept the final report of the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability. Without any public consultation, Council directed staff to implement an action plan that includes an interim rezoning policy that allows for consideration of rezoning applications immediately in existing residential or mixed use areas along arterial roads, city-wide. The SHPOA Fall 2012 newsletter addressed this in depth.

As a result, properties within one half of a kilometre of 16th and Granville, in particular properties in First Shaughnessy between 16th and Matthews Avenue on Granville Street, could be subject to new zoning which will allow for multiple family dwellings up to 6 stories. This is disturbing to anyone who cares about the preservation of Vancouver's history and heritage.

In 2013 we have seen the RIZE project at East Broadway and Kingsway, where the city planners' schematic of the project differed alarmingly from the one portrayed in The Straight. We have also seen the closure of Point Grey Road/Cornwall St. for cyclists. Despite the small size of HUB, Metro Vancouver's main cycling lobby group, they have the funding and power to push for items on their wish list towards a "cycling Utopia" in Vancouver. It is impossible to find out the true cost of all these bike lanes to citizens, as the figures are combined with other capital costs in the City's 2012 Financial Statements.

In 2013 we have also seen community plans being disregarded as increased density is foisted on neighbourhoods all over Vancouver, with arrogant disregard for the citizens' wishes. We need to put the "community" back into "community planning".

In July 2013, Council submitted the "Regional Growth Strategy", previously known as the "Liveable Context Statement", to Metro Vancouver for approval, again without public input. This increases the influence of Metro Vancouver, Translink and the Province over Vancouver's civic authority. The Mayor's "Interim Rezoning Policy" is included in this, in effect, implementing land use policies that give greater regional and Translink influence in land use decisions.

This past year I have been to many neighbourhood meetings, City

Hall rallies, new political party startup meetings and one message emerges clearly: "Stop the Dictatorship at City Hall". Vision has voted as a block on every single issue in almost the last 5 years!

What can SHPOA do? As a community organisation we need a strong membership to ensure that we have a voice in community decisions. We all need to vote in the next election and ensure that governance in Vancouver reflects the desires and needs of the majority of its citizens, not just the whims of special-interest groups.

Cheryl Munro

## Density and Democracy

As residents of Shaughnessy, many of you must be wondering how our community will be affected by the many arbitrary changes in planning policy that are being made at Vancouver's City Hall. The primary focus of these changes is increased density in all of Vancouver's neighbourhoods, including ours. According to the Mayor and Councillors, increased density is required to bring about affordable housing. In their scenario, everyone who wants to is entitled to live in the City and the method of achieving this goal is to have us all live closer together in smaller spaces. Quality of life issues and liveability considerations, however, have been deemed superfluous to the accommodation of growth.

While citizen's groups throughout Vancouver, including the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owner's Association have voiced their concern, the City's politicians have simply shut them out of the planning process.

Although the City's density agenda has yet to impact our community, our civic politicians and bureaucrats have crafted new zoning bylaws that will have an impact on Shaughnessy very soon. All of the property abutting arterials, passing through and bounding our area is now subject to multi-family residence construction. These residences can consist of three-storey townhomes as well as six-storey condominiums. The homes behind or in front could be demolished and new "affordable" construction could also be built in their place. Our community will have no influence on the design or massing, as our relevant community guidelines appear to have been unilaterally eliminated. The City is also unconcerned about providing the additional infra-structure that will be required for the added residents, such as fire protection, schools, and parks.

Developers will provide a minimal amount of 'amenity' kick-backs to the City, but the evidence to date is that this money will be spent without any input from the community and often on projects of very questionable value. The brunt of what becomes necessary will come from our taxes.

It seems that the current regime at City Hall views Vancouver as one great amorphous entity over which it wishes to exert autocratic control. They see Shaughnessy, as well as all of the other unique communities in Vancouver, as rebellious enclaves that are trying to thwart their dogmatic master plans. There are examples almost daily wherein small minorities of activists, who are sympathetic to the current council, are able to thwart the will of the majority to drive changes that are self-serving and of questionable value.

It appears that the City has come to see itself as "master" with its residents as "servants". It is time that Vancouver's electorate demonstrates the fallacy of this perception and makes use of the

ballot box to correct the situation in no uncertain terms. If our community and those throughout Vancouver are going to regain our rightful voice in determining what we want our city to be, we must get out to the polls and vote for political leaders who share our concerns.

Make no mistake: Shaughnessy is under the same threat as the rest of residential Vancouver. We have to join them in voting for a new Council that will reel in the current 'density at any cost' policy and re-establish the trust and confidence that is required between Vancouver's citizens and City Hall.

Mik Ball

## Deconstruction - Demolition Goes Green!

In the Spring Newsletter I lamented the demolition process in Vancouver, mentioning the wanton destruction that was occurring to expedite the building process. Since then I am delighted to see that the City of Vancouver has implemented policies and procedures to encourage "deconstruction" over demolition.

In Vancouver, demolished building materials comprise about 36% of the city's solid waste. As part of the "Greenest City 2020" initiative, which aims by 2020 to reduce solid waste to 50% of 2008 levels, the City of Vancouver is taking a new approach to managing demolition debris. The concept is that, instead of moving in with a giant bulldozer and shovelling the whole works into a bin, a building is taken apart in stages and the components are salvaged wherever possible.

In 2010 Metro Vancouver (formerly the GVRD) published an Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan, including two goals aimed at reducing waste disposal from construction and demolition:

- Divert 80 per cent of demolition, land-clearing and construction waste by 2015.
- Ban all wood from disposal by 2015.

To achieve these goals they have defined the "5 R" hierarchy for waste reduction:

- Reduce waste at source.
- Reuse where possible.
- Recycle products at the end of their useful life.
- Recover energy or materials from the waste stream.
- Residuals managed in an environmentally sound manner.

With the 5 R hierarchy in mind, the City of Vancouver is offering a Deconstruction Permit for single or two-family dwellings. Formerly building a new home meant getting a development permit first and then acquiring a demolition permit before the project could proceed. The City is now offering to issue a Deconstruction Permit **before** the building permit, allowing projects a head start. In addition the City offers a 50% reduction on landfill fees for any materials that cannot be recycled, up to 15 tonnes of debris.

To find out how to get a Deconstruction Permit, visit:

<http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/demolition-deconstruction-permit.aspx>.

Gillian Kirkby

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**\*\*\* JOIN SHPOA TO-DAY! Membership is just \$25 \*\*\***

