

Dear Editor:

As the owners of WestVista Terrace, we are obviously devastated that North Cowichan council rejected our presentation on a 3-3 tie on March 6. This project can provide over 800 much-needed housing units starting just 500 feet from the new Cowichan Hospital and provide an immediate solution to the lack of housing in the Cowichan Valley, while providing an estimated \$60 million in tax revenue over the next 25 years.

We take issue with the emphasis of Robert Barron's characterization of the March 6 North Cowichan Council meeting. It's not that the statements were incorrect, it's that the article missed the entire context of what the presentation to council was all about. We were asking council to open the 2022 Official Community Plan and restore the original, award winning Land Area Plan that we designed this project for in the beginning.

The reason we decided to invest in that specific area 8 years ago in 2018 was because of the excellent LAP created by North Cowichan staff and approved by the previous council. WestVista Terrace (previously Bell McKinnon Northwest), fit the LAP like a glove and met every one of its requirements.

We were horrified when the One Cowichan-dominated North Cowichan council arbitrarily decided to over-ride that LAP with a second, new Official Community Plan, which was re-written specifically to stop development of the lands we own.

We would have never invested in that area if we knew the LAP under the previous OCP was going to be tossed aside. Who would do such a good thing? Because of this council's decision, most of the properties north of Herd Road have been devalued by as much as 50 percent.

Coun. Istace's comments shared in the article were his opinion, not fact. There are not 20 years of residential build-out on the south side of Herd Road; there is no backlog of projects.

Our project signed a Memorandum of Understanding with RavenStone Construction to be the lead trades contractor on the project. Council's vote makes this second time recently that North Cowichan has sidestepped working with First Nations companies, as Khowutzun Development Corporation firms were shut out of major contract opportunities at the new hospital.

Our next steps will be carefully made. We can hope that a new council will be more open to growth as we have proposed, and grandfather the original LAP. Our other option is to complete negotiations with First Nations interests, which would mean North Cowichan will have no say in the project at all, or any of the tax revenue.

Sincerely,
Elaine and John Lichtenwald
WestVista Terrace owners