

June 18, 2011

The Editor
North Shore News
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For a few years it looked as if we, in the City of North Vancouver, could trust our council and staff to be good caretakers of our salmon streams.

Well, it seems that day is over, with the latest flawed development proposal slated for a quick public hearing right at the start of the summer holidays. At issue is a land swap that compromises lands near Mosquito Creek's most sensitive salmon habitat.

Deja vu or what ? Many will remember there was strong public opinion against the "martial arts" building next to Mosquito Creek.

The outcry was not about its intended use, it was because the sale of public parkland was arranged long before asking the public, and because streamside habitat was being destroyed. As the sale went through, City council and staff stated they "would not develop or alter any more land next to the creek and would keep the entire area, north of the building to Marine Drive, as natural green space".

A few years later, they built the Low Level bridge and said: "That's it. No more bridges or crossings."

On July 4, council and staff would like to finalize an agreement with a developer.

The developer would get publicly owned land next to Mosquito Creek, the City Yard site, and the City would get brand new Works Yard buildings, built by the developer, on different land farther south, at no cost to us taxpayers. No monetary cost, that is.

The developer would then build 375 residential units on the current City Yard site AND a new bridge over the creek, to be located in the green space the City pledged to keep green to compensate for the "martial arts" building.

All bridges are an unfortunate source of debris, trash and contaminants, and noise. They chop up habitat, block wildlife movement, and eliminate a sizeable piece of the tree canopy. There are already two crossing the creek here - one just north and one just south of the site.

Another bridge is actually not needed for access, as there are two ways in and out of the site now. It's more likely a design feature, part of a wish list, possibly to help make the housing units more saleable to future residents.

The site is between two high traffic routes, Marine Drive and the Low Level Connector, and close to the very noisy railway.

All of the land alongside the creek is supposed to be protected stream habitat.

Instead, the section north of the development site to Marine Drive, would end up with a sidewalk on one side of the creek, a paved trail on the other and a bridge (two vehicle lanes wide plus sidewalks) between, where none of those exist now.

One observation ---

Last year someone cut trees next to the creek and the City's Bylaw Enforcement department fined them, as they should, under their protection bylaws.

It's the same place the City now wants to clear cut for a bridge.

None of the City's Advisory Committees had any concerns about the proposed development.

I have concerns. That some people always put the environment dead last.

The Public Hearing on Monday, July 4, 2011 will be the last chance to comment, in person or in writing, to City Council.

Requests or comments can also be sent before then.

Drop off to Mayor and Council, City Hall, 141 West 14th Street, North Vancouver, BC, V7M 1H9
Fax to 604-985-9417. Email to Mayor and Council <clerks@cnv.org>

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