



The Civic Election Report

NOVEMBER 12, 2008

Olympic Athletes Village becomes political football

The hottest civic election issue at the moment centres around the Olympic athletes village development in southeast False Creek.

Both political parties are tossing around the controversial topic after it was revealed that city council unanimously approved a \$100-million loan to Millennium, the project's developer, who has run into financial trouble.

At the forefront of the debate is the amount of the loan and that the decision was made during an in-camera meeting. Closed-door meetings of this type are not uncommon when the city deals with issues relating to property, labour and legalities.

As business people, we understand that negotiations behind closed doors are necessary in order to protect the city's interests.

The Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition accepts the assurances from city staff and elected officials that they are acting in the best interests of citizens in the Millennium project.

Voters should understand there is a lot of misinformation and that not all the details of the project are available at this time.

Like all interested parties, the coalition will continue to watch this situation closely.

Vision Vancouver criticized for fake Twitter page

Vision Vancouver's attempt to spoof Peter Ladner using an online social networking tool has backfired.

The blogosphere was abuzz last week when the Vancouver Sun discovered a Twitter account seemingly set up by the Vancouver Non-Partisan Association mayoral candidate.

Twitter is a service that allows people to keep in touch via short messages that answer the question: What are you doing? The service lets you "follow" other people to see what they're up to as they update their status messages.

Those who navigated to the Twitter page for Ladner found his picture on it, as well as some messages that were supposedly posted by him. The postings included musings about his vacation plans following the election and the Millennium project.

After some investigating by the Sun, Vision admitted to setting up the account. Following the story's publication, the account was removed and a new one was created with reference that it was not the real Peter Ladner. But that account disappeared shortly afterward and the original account is now active again with no attempt to show that it is not authored by the real Ladner.

This has been a hot topic for voters and Twitter users, some of them feeling they were duped. One person suggested it is similar to writing a letter to the editor under someone else's name.



VANCOUVER FAIR TAX COALITION

NPA's Ladner agrees to establish task force on economic benchmarks

Peter Ladner supports an important Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition proposal to gather information on the health of the business community and help set a course for employment and economic sustainability.

The coalition is calling for a Mayor's Task Force on Employment and Economic Sustainability Benchmarks. The group will consist of representatives from the Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition, business organizations, and city staff.

The information will provide important measurements and benchmarks, such as the number of businesses operating, the levels of employment, businesses leaving or closing, and how many residents are working outside the city. This will allow city council to better understand and monitor the economic sustainability and health of Vancouver.

Much of the information is already being collected by various governments, private and public research firms, associations and academics.

The proposal also calls for an independent consultant to produce a report annually. The first report will be presented to city council by March 31, 2009.

The Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition has been concerned about this matter for some time. It believes the task force will provide city council

with the comprehensive data it needs to make informed decisions.

Vision Vancouver mayoral candidate Gregor Robertson did not respond by press time.

Make your voice heard: Get out and vote on Nov. 15

The campaign for fair taxation in the City of Vancouver is not over. We must show the next city council that one of its priorities is to focus on Vancouver's largest taxpayer: business owners.

You can do that by making your voice heard loud and clear on Vancouver Civic Election Day on November 15.

Your vote is important. We need to remind city hall that Vancouver's employers are vital to the city's economic sustainability. Businesses create jobs for Vancouverites, and healthy businesses mean a strong economy and funds to solve pressing social problems.

Please take the time to vote this weekend and also encourage your friends and family. For more information about how to register to vote and where the polling stations are, visit <http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/election2008/>

Published by the Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition

About the Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition

The Vancouver Fair Tax Coalition (VFTC) is a non-partisan group of local business improvement associations, small business owners and managers, industrial and office property owners and developers, and business associations, which represent thousands of local businesses. VFTC members are concerned about the high municipal property taxes they pay and the inequitable allocation of the tax burden between residential and commercial real estate. As a result they are seeking the City of Vancouver's commitment to permanently bring municipal property taxes into line with regional and national averages.