

Marion Smith

6580 Mayflower Drive, Richmond, BC V7C 3X6

September 8, 2015

Re: Public Hearing on Bylaw 9280

Schedule 116 to the Minutes of
the Public Hearing meeting of
Richmond City Council held on
Tuesday, September 8, 2015.

Mr. Mayor, Members of Council, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Last week I sent you a map of my subdivision, showing the new construction in red. It is on page PH - 415 in your packages. This map is not, I emphasize, an argument for developing the rest of the subdivision. This is meant to demonstrate just how much the new construction is affecting our neighbourhoods.

The red lots are those that have been redeveloped into megahouses. Very few of these have families living in them. Many have at most two people. I can show you one of these new houses that has clearly been abandoned by its owner. It has never been lived in and the weeds are a foot high.

The white lots on the map represent affordable family housing for those who have lived here for awhile. We all know that Richmond desperately needs affordable housing. Many of the homes that have been torn down had rental suites, so the loss of an older home often means the loss of two affordable dwellings.

There is a market for older homes. There are at least six older homes in our area that have been purchased and are being lived in by the new owners. It is wrong to assume that every older home is ready for demolition. Only in our perverse local housing market are liveable houses torn down. Everywhere else in this country, houses that are twenty, thirty, forty years old are considered desirable dwellings.

You were not elected to pass bylaws to enable a small group of people to make a lot of money. You were elected to ensure that everyone is treated fairly in the bylaws. We are here tonight to ask for fair treatment. When a megahouse affects the neighbour's home and his enjoyment of his property, that isn't fair. It is the result of bad legislation.

We all know that:

- the mass of houses can be controlled by reducing room height to 12 feet and double counting overheight rooms
- house height has a significant impact on the neighbouring houses
- backyards are important to families.

Any bylaw that is passed should, in effect, be a good neighbour bylaw that protects properties from being adversely affected by new construction.

Only two of you attended the consultation meeting for residents, so you missed a rare opportunity to hear your constituents. Please listen to your professional staff and your Advisory Design Panel and bring the room height into line with neighbouring municipalities.

All we want is fairness in the bylaw so that existing properties are not overwhelmed by massive, overheight buildings.