

I'm Jim Wright, 8300 Osgoode Drive, speaking on Item 18 as a concerned citizen.

Mayor Brodie and councillors,

First, to be clear, I'm addressing the **Walmart** mall proposal. In the agenda package, the director of development has identified **Walmart** by name as the anchor store. I see **Walmart** and its joint venture partner SmartCentres as the developers, who list ways the city would gain from their mall. It is therefore fair when citizens list ways that Richmond would *lose*. I'm mentioning that because citizens speaking at the last planning committee meeting were criticized when they referred to **Walmart**.

Now to the main topic. Obviously, the Walmart mall proposal should go to public hearing *but not* when the shortcomings are too great. **Significantly**, two years ago the Walmart mall proposal was slowed down when a giant developer called Polygon identified problems. Polygon has holdings on Alexandra Road on the **north** side of the Walmart mall, which would bring down the value of the condos Polygon wants to sell. Polygon showed how to add living screens of vegetation and got the bonus of a greenspace on a mall parkade rooftop. When Polygon speaks, the City of Richmond jumps. Polygon condos will now have green views to look at and a quasi-park to use.

Now let's shift from Polygon on the **north** side of the mall to **citizens** on the **south** side. For vital reasons, I and others keep pointing out the priceless legacy views from the Garden City Lands area to the **south**, which the Walmart mall would **devastate**. Citizens in that area deserve at least as much love from the City of Richmond as Polygon does. So do *all* citizens who want to enjoy the wonderful setting of *our* central park, the Garden City Lands. It is no harder to save the priceless views for all the citizens struggling to make ends meet than it is to go along with a deal for Polygon and its fellow billionaires of Walmart and SmartCentres.

Here is one clear case of equal or **unequal** treatment of billionaires and us citizens: the views being snatched from the citizens forever need to be *protected and restored before* the proposal goes to public hearing. **This is urgent**. As with Polygon condo views, the people's green views *have a better chance of being saved if they become part of what council recommends*. Local citizens with hard-earned savings (or net debt or nothing) deserve **equal treatment** with billionaires.

This is a land-use issue for a *central* piece of land. It is also an opportunity to make a principled stand. In my experience, the council members are typically principled people, but this city has had **systemic** favoring of developers for so long that I've felt a need to point it out in this crucial decision, with the future of Richmond hanging in the balance. Since you want to act in the best interests of the people of Richmond, please do **not** vote to move this deficient proposal to public hearing until community concerns have been addressed as well as Polygon's.