

Schedule 30 to the Minutes of the
Public Hearing meeting of
Richmond City Council held on
Tuesday, September 8, 2015.

Mayor and Councillors

From: sjeades@direct.ca
Sent: Friday, 4 September 2015 16:48
To: Mayor and Councillors
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Please apply attached letter to the Sept 8th Mass Housing public hearing
Attachments: Letter to Mayor Brodie and City Councilors - September 4, 2015.docx
Categories: 12-8060-20-9280

To Public Hearing	
Date:	SEPT. 8 2015
Item #	6
Re:	BYLAWS 9280+
	9281

I would like the attached letter to be applied to the Tuesday September 8th public hearing regarding Mass Housing.

Thank you.

Sarah Gordon



September 4, 2015

Dear Mayor Brodie and City Councillors,

I moved to Richmond in 1999 from Vancouver. I appreciated many aspects of this city; especially that it was an "Island City by Nature" with its charming blend of farmland intersecting the Fraser River.

When I got married my husband and I chose to raise our family here. We started the way many young families do; we entered the real estate market with limited resources and worked our way up from a townhouse to a single-family dwelling.

While we loved our townhouse we yearned for a larger space and a plot of land to care for. We were very selective when choosing our Steveston neighbourhood, as we knew we would reside there for many years.

Luck was on our side and we found the perfect house and an idyllic cul-de-sac. We were attracted to the Westwind district for a very specific reason – the houses were all built within a short time span and there was a very attractive uniformity in the size of dwellings. The designs complemented each another. The distance between homes was generous, and there were a good number of established trees. It was perfect.

We have watched with horror as other Richmond neighbourhoods have gone under the wrecking ball. Seafair and the Monds has been a nightmare, Riverdale too (R.I.P. Gibbons Drive), and now we have seen the spread into Westwind as the monster homes encroach upon us.

What is happening at City Hall? These massive beasts are destroying virtually every neighbourhood in Richmond. Not only are they aesthetic eyesores with no obvious plan to fit in to their surroundings (look at Vancouver for a better example of this), but they also leave neighbouring homes appearing like garages. What an insult to have your personal "castle" overshadowed by a gargantuan residence. 12' versus 16' ceilings are in question? We live in a home with perfectly liveable 8' ceilings!

These new homes take away sunlight and privacy of neighbouring houses. Beautiful old trees have been removed with \$10,000 fines not even being a sufficient deterrent.

Richmond homeowners have invested a lot of money into live in this community. No matter what year we bought our homes, it is all relative; homes have always been the most expensive investment a family will ever make. Our homes are our sanctuaries. They are a place to call our own.

It is not home owners nor even developers that we must point the finger at – for ultimately it stems from City council and the willingness to entertain developers and allow these monstrosities to be built. Surely a lesson has been learnt from the ONNI Imperial Landing fiasco in Steveston?

Where is the community plan? What exactly IS the vision for Richmond? City centre has become unrecognizable with its plethora of condominium towers, and in stark contrast, mere blocks away mansions fit for royalty appear.

WHY are builders permitted to build to these astronomical heights? Many of these homes are chateaus that should be situated on acreages, not wedged in between suburban homes in established neighbourhoods.

Would it not be advantageous to shift gears and scale back before every neighbourhood is obliterated? Perhaps look to the European model and live a greener lifestyle? These homes are also energy beasts with their electrical and heating demands.

It is excessive and quite frankly it is embarrassing. We have had out of town visitors shake their heads in wonderment at what on earth is going on in our city.

I know that I am not alone in my thinking. Richmond taxpayers are at their wits' end. This issue is tearing communities apart, both literally with bulldozers and metaphorically with resentment.

I am pleading with you as our elected officials to stop approving these mega houses and instead incorporate appropriately sized new homes that fit in with and enhance our neighbourhoods.

Richmond has gone from a charming and liveable city, to a city that I often consider leaving. Surely that cannot be City Hall's wish, to drive out long-term residents in moving van loads?

Yours truly,
Sarah Gordon

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