

**Mayor and Councillors**

Schedule 61 to the Minutes of  
the Public Hearing meeting of  
Richmond City Council held on  
Tuesday, September 8, 2015.

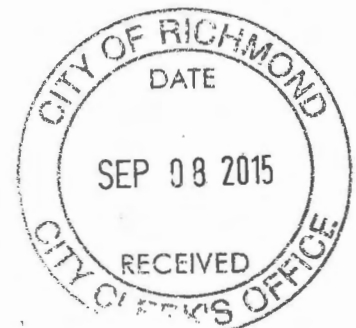
|                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| To Public Hearing |                       |
| Date:             | SEPT. 8 2015          |
| Item #            | 6                     |
| Re:               | BYLAWS 9280 +<br>9281 |

**From:** Tilman Thrum <tthrum@googlemail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 September 2015 14:00  
**To:** Mayor and Councillors  
**Subject:** Submission for Public Hearing Sep 8, 2015 - Bylaw 9280  
**Attachments:** CoR\_Thrum\_bylaw\_amend\_9280.pdf  
  
**Categories:** 12-8060-20-9280

To whom it may concern:

Please find attached my written submission to Mayor and Council in regards to the public hearing on Sep 08, 2015, Amendment Bylaw 9280 et al.

Regards,  
Tilman Thrum



Dr. Tilman Thrum, P.Eng.  
5820 Plover Court  
Richmond, BC, V7E 4K2

Sep 07, 2015

Mayor and Council  
City of Richmond  
via email

**Re: Public Hearing Sep 8, 2015 – Amendment Bylaw 9280**

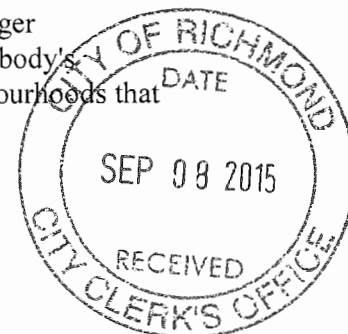
Dear Mayor and Council,

at rare times politicians, whether federal, provincial or municipal, are asked to decide on matters that shape communities for years and decades to come. With your decision on the current trend of house-massing in Richmond you are facing such a pivotal decision point for the City of Richmond. And as politicians you need to find a decision that balances many different individual needs for the greater good of the city and its citizens.

You each have to ask yourself whether you want to support a radically different single-family house style in Richmond with extravagant ceiling heights that no other municipality in the Lower Mainland supports, with often paved front and backyards, fenced and gated front property borders and little space between oversized buildings – or whether you want to support a somewhat slower but steady development of the city in sync with the needs of people of all ages and lifestyles already living here - often for decades - as well as for families who recently moved to or are planning to move to the city; this all while maintaining certain key neighbourhood features such as open front yards, reasonably sized backyards, overall consistent roof lines across neighbourhoods and an acceptable ratio between building volume and lot size.

Looking at the hundreds of submissions you have received so far some trends are clear: Individuals and companies benefitting from massive new developments do not want you to change the status quo, some even want you to relax current standards even more. Concerned residents on the other hand are afraid of their neighbourhoods changing, large houses taking over their backyards, open neighbourhoods being replaced with gated and fenced properties.

You however have to raise above all these submissions and think about what is truly in the interest of the single-family house neighbourhoods of Richmond as a neighbourhood-friendly city, a suburb to one of the most liveable cities on the planet. What does it take to maintain this character and spirit that has brought Richmond to where it is today and why have people moved here over the past decades? What do they find appealing about the city and what will make their neighbourhoods continue to prosper and allow new generations to be brought up here with a strong sense of community? Is it oversized houses with extreme indoor space or is it a healthy ratio between spacious neighbourhoods and individual housing space, respecting the needs for both individual needs as well as space for the larger neighbourhood as a whole that benefits everybody? Is it the drive to support only somebody's individual needs or do individual needs need to be balanced with plans for entire neighbourhoods that are in the interest of everybody?



Richmond currently has no enforceable urban plan in place for the neighbourhoods in question that I am aware of – and this combined with old bylaws that had a very different intent than to open up to legal loopholes that are now being exploited. It is City Council that these neighbourhood communities look up to to set the direction for the next decades.

You need to find the courage to make decisions that will shape this community far beyond your term as an elected representative. You need to consider who you represent. You need to think about what is worth more to this City: Individual benefit – or our court barbeque that we had last night for the 25<sup>th</sup> time and that epitomizes a healthy neighbourhood where people come together, kids support each other in growing up and people look out for each other with respect and no need to put gates around the properties.

One last thought I would like to bring to your attention is how other jurisdictions handle residential development. In Canada we have a stakeholder involvement process when it comes to large public construction projects. However no similar process exists for individual standard building permits. Germany, the country that I grew up in, has a similar process also for residential building permits: Before a permit is granted affected neighbours are formally informed about the building permit intention and have the opportunity to submit their concerns, objection or support. This way individual and neighbourhood concerns are balanced. This process can go all the way to a formal investigation to consider what the best solution is. The intent however is that the design and plans are done such from the beginning that they match overall with the character of the neighbourhood as that way no delay will occur.

Ultimately an urban plan for Richmond's residential neighbourhoods will be required, a plan that is enforceable and sets proper development guidelines. Until then this City Council has to show the courage that it is willing to balance the greater community interests with that of individuals.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Dr. Tilman Thrum, P.Eng.