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**Schedule 5 to the minutes
of the Regular Council meeting
held on Monday, July 8, 2013**

City of Richmond

Mayor, Council & Planning Department Staff

July 8, 2013

My name is Robert Dubbert and I reside at 4420 Garden City Rd.

As a long time home owner, and a lifelong Richmond resident, I am expressing my views on the current status of the West Cambie-Alexandra Neighbourhood Plan.

The current zoning and future plans encompass a strip of properties along the east side of Garden City Road, running approximately from Cambie Road south to Alexandra Road. These parcels incorporate approximately 20-25 properties.

I have lived at this address since 1987, and I am the third generation to be living in the area since the 1920's. Dubbert Street was named after our family.

In recent years, the decline in the quality of this neighbourhood has been dramatic as redevelopment has slowly taken place. Most homes in the area have become rental properties and have become run down. Others have been abandoned, boarded up, destroyed by arson, occupied by squatters, and overrun with vermin like rats. Many lots are now vacant and overgrown, with trash constantly dumped on them. Developers like Polygon have been building some quality multifamily developments in the area, with the resultant increase in heavy truck traffic, new residential traffic, noise, and dust. We are not receiving the services that we pay taxes for, and this area is still on septic fields and tanks. When we have problems with service providers like Shaw Cable and Internet, we are told that the infrastructure is old and needs to be replaced. However, Shaw and other companies are waiting for this area to be redeveloped before proceeding with any infrastructure upgrades.

To the south of us, the new major shopping center that will include WalMart, London Drugs, and several other businesses, will bring welcomed jobs, retail stores and services, and additional tax base to the area.

Basically, the entire neighbourhood, bounded by Alderbridge Way to the south, Cambie Road to the north, Number 4 Road on the east, and Garden City Road on the west has already, or will soon undergo massive change. Generally, I think the transition from run down, large lot single family homes to modern apartment building, condominiums, park space and other infrastructure like the City's Geothermal heat plant on Odlin Road have been positive additions to the neighbourhood.

However, some recent decisions by the City leave me puzzled. In the southeast quadrant of the neighbourhood, in the area of Alderbridge Way and Number 4 Road, City staff had previously identified this as an environmentally sensitive area that would exclude housing. Without warning or notification to the residents in this area, a change was made some months ago to remove this designation. The city held an open house and gave a few options for the public to provide input on. The city is now allowing a townhouse development on this site. I would be interested in hearing the logic and rationale behind this decision.

Our home, along with others on the east side of Garden City Road from Cambie Road to Alexandra Road, now face the possibility of being left "as is" until 2041 or beyond, based on the report from Mr. Terry Crowe from the City of Richmond Planning Department. Many of these properties have become run down rental properties, or vacant lots. To keep the "status quo" for these properties for another 30 years or beyond makes absolutely no sense. We will be sandwiched into a narrow strip of properties between an ever increasingly busy Garden City Road, collector side streets, and new multifamily properties at our rear property lines. As mentioned, we will continue to endure outdated infrastructure, increased noise, and traffic.

The City's assertion that this land is needed to be held for future business/commercial uses makes no sense. What is the city's business case to justify this? The business and commercial market is generally driven by private investors who identify needs in the marketplace and build accordingly, the projects to suit the market, where they are needed. A linear site like what would

remain on the east side of Garden City Road provides developers little options to maximize their size of developments for the site.

There is currently a glut of business and commercial space in the Richmond market; in fact it exceeds 20% vacancy and is the highest in Metro Vancouver.

There is however, a severe lack of available industrial land. The city's answer to this is to allow the continued destruction and removal of industrial and warehouse properties in north Richmond, particularly around the Olympic Oval and Brighthouse Estates. This displaces businesses and jobs, which will often move out of Richmond, and removes these properties from the tax base. The City has also, as reported in the local newspapers, allowed 3 major new developments in Richmond to forgo adding social housing to their developments in lieu of a \$14.1 million dollar payment, which is reported to have been placed into a fund for future social housing.

The reality is the need for industrial sites and social housing are both real and needed now to maintain the balance of the tax base, jobs, and community. With a glut of Commercial/business space, it makes no sense to hold our properties in reserve for years to come.

In the past, we have seen the Official Community Plan adopted, then amended several times, as needs and demands changed in the City of Richmond. It is inevitable then, that the need for this strip of land on the east side of Garden City Road for uses other than business/commercial uses will be more likely. We face the potential of being an orphaned island of run down properties for the next 30 years, unless a more common sense approach is taken to our area.

The current overabundance of business and commercial space is well documented. Across the street from our house, just to the south, is a small strip mall that was built almost fifteen years ago. Since opening, only one of the 6 or so units has ever been occupied. A drive around the neighbourhood to the immediate west of Garden City Road reveals many vacant storefronts, some for years on end.

Home Depot tried to get approval to locate on the southwest corner of Garden City and Cambie Roads; however, the City denied this location, citing additional traffic, etc. Now there is a large mall on site that attracts the same traffic and noise, even with several vacant store fronts in the building.

In closing, it is my wish that the City of Richmond will review their decision and make the changes to allow our strip of properties along the east side of Garden City Road to be redeveloped into multifamily housing or mixed use, like most of the immediate area. The noticeable improvement to this area, which sits along a busy north-south traffic corridor, would be immediate, welcomed and what the homeowners in this area desire. Forcing us to remain in the area for up to 30 more years, with inferior services and infrastructure, while there is an uncertain and questionable need for future business and commercially zoned properties, is simply not fair. As a long term property owner and taxpayer who is nearing retirement, I would like to downsize and either move into the new housing coming into the area, or out of this area all together. The City has an opportunity to redevelop our area into a showpiece of multifamily living or mixed use in the short term, rather than leaving it as an eyesore for another thirty or more year.

Thank you for your time on this matter.

Sincerely;

Bob Dubbert