

Jim Wright, 8300 Osgoode Drive, Richmond, on Item 8, Oct. 15, 2012

Mayor Brodie and councillors,

Right now it is *too early* to cancel the **West Cambie Natural Park**. That has become clear for several reasons.

In the Official Community Plan, the people of West Cambie get only a fraction of the city-wide parkland standard, and the one mid-size park that they do have in the official plan may now be taken away. That would cut them back to one little park, some *school* land, and a *potential* greenway.

Council meetings have talked about replacement benefits for the people of West Cambie. For instance, it's said that they could have easy access to the Garden City Lands by way of a pedestrian overpass. A structure like that over 200th Avenue in Langley cost \$3 million last year. An overpass could be good if done right, but *at this stage* it's just an expensive figment of someone's hopes.

There *could* be offsetting ecological initiatives. For instance, I recently talked with two very able city staff members about creating a wildlife corridor along the north edge of Alderbridge Way. It would restore and enhance both a damaged Garden City Lands viewscape *and* the Walmart environmentally sensitive area that has been degraded. With ongoing collaboration, that can be done at minimal cost while adding city-owned parkland. However, that still requires more-definite City support, along with dedicated community action, so it doesn't exist yet.

In contrast, rushing now to turn over the West Cambie Natural Park to developers would hinder the feasibility of creating the multi-value wildlife corridor. If council holds off on approving the bylaw, the townhouse developers will have an incentive to collaborate, just as Walmart does. In contrast, giving the developers something for nothing today would weaken our position. It would also threaten the legacy views from the Garden City Lands, devaluing the Lands for community wellness and as a hub of Richmond ecotourism and agritourism.

The principles I'm advocating can be implemented even if you *later* pave the way for a townhouse development in the West Cambie Natural Park. However, I don't live in West Cambie, and the local people need to be consulted about that. Richmond does meaningful consultation at times, but the supposed consultation about the natural park has been window dressing.

Most significantly, the city implied the key decision as though it had *already been made* and then limited citizens' survey input to whether they would like the townhouse development with or without apartments. A few citizens ventured to write down *unapproved* thoughts, and the survey clerk simply rejected them. Actually, the key decision has *still not* been made, and there *is* still time do consultation.

As I've mentioned, *some very promising things have happened* in this West Cambie Natural Park matter, and please don't lose sight of that. Please *do* keep building on them—and let go of the unworthy stuff, starting by *not* approving the bylaw *at this time*.