

## **UBC commitment to school facilities** (as submitted to VSB on 16 January 2008, with typos corrected)

There are many interrelated issues involved in the “VSB Educational Facilities Review” proposal released publicly on January 12, 2008. This feedback deals specifically with UBC’s commitment to provide school facilities, and the proposed “Closure and sale of Queen Elizabeth Annex in order to finance the purchase of the vacant National Research Council (NRC) building at UBC” (Jules Quesnel letter dated 11 January 2008).

It is hopefully clear to all involved that UBC is not part of the City of Vancouver, nor is UBC part of the University Endowment Lands (<http://uel.ceiarchitecture.com/default.asp>). UBC is a separate entity operating under the BC University Act with its own borders, its own community plans, taxes, etc. There appears to be some kind of agreement that the Vancouver School Board (VSB) will operate schools at UBC.

### **UBC representation in VSB consultation process**

At the January 15 public meeting at QE Annex, Al Poettcker of UBC Properties Trust attended and responded to some questions and issues during the 3 hour meeting. It was stated that Mr. Poettcker does not represent UBC because he is an employee of UBC Properties Trust.

According to the public UBC financial statements (March 31, 2006 Consolidated Financial Statements<sup>\*</sup>), UBC Properties Trust is a 100% owned subsidiary at UBC. This report lists the salaries of all University employees. Mr. Poettcker, along with other UBC Properties Trust employees, is listed in this document (Poettcker salary listed as \$290,677 per p. 41). Because UBC Properties Trust employees are considered UBC employees, coupled with the fact that UBC Properties Trust manages \$1 to \$2 billion in UBC funds and 99 year leases of 10’s of hectares of public lands, it seems that an Executive of UBC Properties Trust should be able to speak to the UBC issues. It also seems unreasonable to state in VSB’s report that “There have been on-going discussions between UBC Properties Trust and the VSB” and then claim that VSB has been discussing issues with an unauthorized representative of UBC.

*If UBC Properties Trust is considered an authorized representative of UBC, then why did Mr. Poettcker not answer stakeholder questions and why was it claimed he did not represent UBC?*

*If, in fact, UBC Properties Trust does not represent UBC, then the question is why is there no authorized UBC representative participating in the consultation? Furthermore, why did VSB consult with an unauthorized representative of UBC?*

### **UBC Commitment to School Facilities**

One stakeholder at the 15 January 2008 consultation meeting at QE Annex stated UBC is not subject to City of Vancouver bylaws and, to paraphrase, more or less operates “as it wishes.” Many stakeholders have made convincing arguments that this is how things work in practice. However, there is a formal structure in place for UBC facilities development under an Official Community Plan (Metro Vancouver bylaw 840 – 1996). The Official Community Plan<sup>†</sup> is general in nature and sets development principles, while the subsequent Comprehensive Community Plan and individual neighborhood plans provide further refinement of development plans and **commitments**.

In short, the UBC development plans explicitly state the following.

1. The Official Community Plan bylaw commits that “An elementary school site of not less than 3.0 hectares (including land for playing fields) will be sited in the south campus.” It does NOT say this is contingent upon VSB funding a building retrofit (i.e. NRC).

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<sup>\*</sup> These statements are available at the UBC Bookstore, usually held behind the main cashier counter and available for \$5.

<sup>†</sup> All UBC community plans can be downloaded from [www.planning.ubc.ca/corebus/landuse.html](http://www.planning.ubc.ca/corebus/landuse.html)

2. The Comprehensive Community Plan (adopted October 26, 2000) states:

(page 41) “Provide an elementary school site with a minimum site area of 3.0 hectares. The timing of school construction will depend on demand and availability of funding. The Vancouver School Board will determine timing for construction of the new school.”

(page 63) “The configuration of buildings and outdoor recreation facilities on the combined site will be determined in conjunction with the Vancouver School Board.”

(page 63) “There appears to be a more immediate need for new facilities, as the existing University Hill Elementary is nearing capacity. An interim solution is being pursued whereby a temporary annex facility for grades K — 3 would be established elsewhere on campus, until the South Campus school is built.”

3. The South Campus Neighborhood Plan states:

(page 13) “The NRC building will be retrofitted for the school facility. An elementary or a K – 12 community school are options being considered by the Vancouver School Board in consultation with the Provincial Ministry of Education and the UBC Faculty of Education. The school will be built in the first phase of construction of the neighbourhood. **If government funding for the school is not available at this time, UBC will build the facility.** The University would lease the school to the Vancouver School Board to operate the facility.” (bold added by authors)

*The Official Community Plan, Comprehensive Community Plan, and South Campus Neighborhood plans all clearly indicate a timely commitment to provide school facilities, acknowledge VSB’s role in defining requirements and operating the facilities, and state that “if government funding for the school is not available ... UBC will build the facility.” UBC has clearly made a commitment to provide a complete school facility. Therefore, why does VSB propose to sell Queen Elizabeth Annex to pay for this school?*

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