

Submission to VSB consultation 17 January 2008

The issues I present today were mostly introduced yesterday at the Lord Byng consultation meeting. Copies of yesterday's submission are available for anyone interested (hardcopy or email build.the.school@gmail.com). I will summarize the issues here, highlight new information, and request that VSB extend the consultation period to allow for meaningful consultations and due process.

On January 12 the VSB proposed to close Queen Elizabeth Annex to sell the land, then to use the funds to pay for upgrades to the National Research Council (NRC) building at UBC. The key issue VSB wants to address is facilities -- both new facilities for UBC K-12 students, and seismic upgrades of existing facilities.

UBC development is authorized under a Metro Vancouver (formerly GVRD) bylaw. This bylaw is implemented through formal community plans (copies of community plans available at www.planning.ubc.ca). These plans provide specific commitments for UBC to provide new school facilities.

UBC committed in the year 2000 to provide a temporary K-3 school facility (see Comprehensive Community Plan quotes below), but did not. If it had, then VSB would now have much more flexibility to implement seismic upgrades in a timely manner and with less disruption of students. Furthermore, many UBC families would be dealing with much shorter daily commutes at the present time.

UBC committed (see South Campus Community Plan quotes below) to build a permanent school facility even without government funding. Government funding is not available, and yet UBC will not build a facility. Instead UBC wants VSB to commit to pay to upgrade a facility – and to make that funding commitment by March. While the focus is on the NRC building, UBC's commitment was actually independent of whether the NRC building was available for school use or not. Incidentally, UBC's funding commitment for new school facilities is consistent with historical precedent in that U-Hill high school and elementary school were both built without Vancouver or VSB funds.

In summary, VSB should not have to pay for a UBC school facility when facilities have already been committed and funded through UBC development. Whether QE Annex should be closed, upgraded, relocated, reconfigured, or rebuilt is a separate issue. UBC committed to provide both temporary and permanent school facilities. It is not doing so, and now the VSB wants to sell city property to pay for facilities at UBC.

As these facility deficiencies fall under Metro Vancouver bylaws, I plan to present these issues to the appropriate Metro Vancouver committee and the Board. At the present time, Metro Vancouver has not established committees for 2008 (see www.gvrd.bc.ca/board/index.htm or contact Klara Kutakova), and none will be set or scheduled until the end of January at the earliest. Once scheduled, bylaws require delegation applications 9 business days in advance. Neither I (nor anyone) can be heard by the relevant committee and Board on this issue until March or later (depending on committee schedules; some meet only quarterly). ***VSB's proposal to close and sell QE Annex land has implications for multiple generations of community members, while allowing only 35 days of public consultation. Therefore I request that VSB extend the public consultation period to allow due process.***

UBC community plan quotes (plans available at www.planning.ubc.ca)

The UBC Comprehensive Community Plan (published in year 2000) says on page 41 that UBC will "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." On page 63 it states "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."

The UBC South Campus Community Plan (published in 2005) states on page 13 that "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." later on page 13 it states that "If the NRC is not retrofitted for a school, it will retain its Research designation and an institutional use compatible with the neighbourhood would be assigned."

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