

Please note that I am opposed to a council hand-picked in the mayor's living room, a \$395,412 salary for a city manager, a "white elephant" city hall that was part of municipal expenses rising 16% last year, Richard Branson getting \$420,000 at Surrey's Regional Economic Summit, the mayor making \$150,000 of which one-third is tax-free, a million in uncapped contributions to Surrey First at election time, and free trips for politicians to England, India, China, Colombia, Italy and Puerto Rico. If the Surrey circus is to remain the same each year, at least the clowns should change. We should fight repeat offenders - not re-elect them. Yet the developer-bought council candidates keep getting re-elected.

How well thought-out do you think the current Grandview Heights General Use Plan (GLUP) is?

Poorly thought-out, for I remember Grandview Heights as a beautiful neighbourhood, but now parts remind me of Sudbury in the 1960s.

What do you think about the extensive density increases that often occur at the Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) level?

I believe in density, but also in maintaining green spaces and natural beauty and wildlife and clean air and waterways. Grandview Heights was an environmental pearl close to the ocean with mountain views and gorgeous farm landscape.

NCPs are "guidelines" not by-laws. What do you think of the ability of developers to apply for amendments to zoning and other NCP elements?

I think developers should not be able to turn a neighbourhood into something that local residents are in opposition to. I have been part of fighting developers in Cloverdale. The process is rotten. Mayor and Council let developers go after land wherever they want, leaving residents alone to muster a defence.

What does 'good environmental and social stewardship' mean to you in relation to city planning?

As written above, I think such stewardship means enhancing the natural beauty and livability of a community, not denigrating it. Current council is bankrolled to the tune of close to a million dollars by developer interests. I cannot understand anyone voting for candidates who fill their pockets with self-interested developer money.

In your opinion, who 'owns' a neighbourhood? How do you weigh the 'ownership value' of long-term residents and new residents who plan to stay, over other, shorter term interests such as political pressures and the development industry?

I have been a long-time environmental activist in Surrey. Just ask Donna Passmore or Kevin Purton. I have no money to fight this election, but I have pretty good name recognition. I wish your organization were able to put some money into advertisement against the incumbents who care not a whit for the environment, despite their ridiculous platitudes and glib speeches. I fought Dianne Watts on pesticides, plastic bags, tree preservation, eagle nest preservation, truck parking on the ALR, removal of land from the ALR (which everyone ignores has happened near me in Cloverdale), violations on blueberry farms, even her false claim to live in Cloverdale. I have had little to no success. I sued the City of Surrey for ignoring its by-laws and lost, in a decision where the judge made absolutely no sense. Change needs to come to city hall, but it won't without word getting out to the masses about how awful their record is on land preservation and quality, thoughtful, sustainable development.

Best regards,  
Jim McMurtry