



**FALSE CREEK**  
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

## **2013 - 2014 President's Report**

### **Advocacy and Accountability**

#### **Greening the Creek - Light Bulbs and Law Suits**

The FCRA continues to promote a high quality of life in our community. This year marks the beginning of our Green Light Campaign - greening the creek with green lights in support of Creekside Park. Over 1200 green light bulbs are now shining in homes around False Creek, sending a nightly message that our community wants Creekside Park now. Our campaign has captured interest city-wide. Check our web site for access to all the media attention we have attracted. Future light bulb sales are advertised on the web site, as well as on our Facebook page. The lights will shine on until the “green” is real GREEN SPACE in Creekside Park. Our [change.org](http://change.org) petition is attracting considerable support. Sign up now!

The FCRA has also filed a Judicial Review Application in Supreme Court. This is the legal tool used to challenge decisions made by public servants. We are challenging the ability of the City of Vancouver's General Manager of Planning to sanction commercial activities in land that is zoned for exclusive park and recreational use. Lot 9 has been zoned as park since 1984 when the initial land use plan was approved by City Council. Our Judicial Review Application covers both the “temporary” development permit for Concord's sales centre, and the commercial parking operation on the remaining portions of Lot 9. The case is scheduled to be heard in Supreme Court of British Columbia on December 12, 2014. Concord Pacific has been granted full status in the proceeding, so we are going up against both the City of Vancouver and Concord Pacific.

Of significance is that for the first time, the City has indicated to Concord Pacific that the current 3 year “temporary” permit will be the last — no additional extensions will be granted. Further, the City has prohibited commercial parking. However, the city will grant Special Permits for land use rentals, as we saw with the long term usage of our park site for the taping of the TV reality show The Game of Homes.

#### **Speaking up for Our Neighbourhood at City Council**

In June, Council considered Concord's plans for False Creek Central and many of us attended nights of public hearings. The FCRA submissions are posted on our web site.

This is the development planned for Lot 5B West, i.e. west of the Cambie Bridge. Residents will recall that this development came forward in 2011 but was rejected because of widespread community dissatisfaction over the amenity package which included a 2 acre “parklet” instead of the 9 acre park and no viable plan for the use of these 2 acres as actual green space.

Sadly, this year's version of the proposal was equally unsatisfactory to residents. The amenity package really had nothing in it for us. Many of us came forward to speak at Council, but in the end the development was approved by the majority of Council. The amenity package

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included a facility for the Dragon Boat Society, and paddlers came from across the Lower Mainland to support the development. In the end, Council supported this regional amenity as opposed to neighbourhood and community requirements.

The development includes more residential units than previously proposed, with no daycare provided and not one more blade of grass to meet the needs of our growing community. The original residential cap for Concord Pacific was 7,650. The 9 acre park was part of that original agreement. Concord has now 11,511 units approved by City Council with no increase in green space allocated, and the last 9 acre lot still not parkland.

### **The Joint Working Group on Northeast False Creek**

For the past 7 years members of the FCRA have participated in meetings with developers, city staff, and other stakeholders such as Science World and the Roundhouse. These meetings provided an opportunity to learn what the staff and developers were planning for our community.

We did have an opportunity for some input into the Community Amenity Contribution package proposed for 5 B East, i.e. the lot east of the Cambie Bridge that was approved last year. We emphasized the need for improving the aging playground in the Creekside Park meadow, moving ahead on planning for Dragon Boat and rowing facilities, providing for recreational opportunities for older youth, and refurbishing the crumbling pool infrastructure at the Dr. Sun Yat Sen public garden.

We had no such input into the much larger Community Amenity Contribution package developed in private between Concord Pacific and the City staff for 5 B West. We voiced our concerns about what was proposed in a Joint Working Group meeting in May. The City hasn't convened another meeting since then.

Included in that package was \$500,000 to redesign the pedestrian and cycle paths in front of the sales centre on lot 9, weaving in and out between the trees and light standards. This seems a waste of money as supposedly the city has decided that the sales centre will be moved when the current permit expires in the spring of 2017, allowing for the removal of the light standards entirely and widening the path to allow for safe passage. That work should be paid for by Concord Pacific as part of their existing financial obligations.

### **The Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods**

There are now 26 community organizations from across Vancouver working together as a coalition in support of the principle that neighbourhoods should be at the heart of planning and development. This Collaborative Planning model is captured in the Coalition's statement of Principles and Goals. This is available at the coalition's web site: [coalitionvan.org](http://coalitionvan.org).

The FCRA is a founding member of the coalition and co-chairs the group. We participated in the Coalition's Town Hall Forum: Putting the Community Back Into Community Planning. Over 350 people from across the city attended the event. All parties, except Vision Vancouver indicated support for the collaborative model outlined in the Principles and Goals.

The Coalition noted the Mayor's recent apology and commitment to do better, and has requested a meeting to discuss a collaborative approach to planning and development.

## **The Civic Election**

As has been our tradition, the FCRA sponsored an all-party meeting so that residents could hear directly from candidates. We invited two candidates per party, plus mayoralty candidates. We were very pleased with the turnout: all parties were represented by two candidates, except Vision Vancouver which sent only one; and mayoralty candidates included Bob Kasting, Kirk LaPointe, Colin Shandler, and Meena Wong.

Almost 300 residents packed the room at the Creekside Community Centre, making for a lively evening of political discussion.

## **Noisy Skytrain Tracks**

The FCRA has been actively involved with Translink's Director of Wayside Maintenance in order to improve the noise levels. Maintenance and track repairs that took place over many nights during the summer have resulted in a decrease in overall track noise although some connectors still require further spalling. Also the empty train cars that were moved to Waterfront Station at 4:15 am are now being moved later in the day to accommodate residents who live adjacent to the tracks. We have had a very good working relationship with Translink during this maintenance work and we are hoping that this community relationship will continue.

# **Community Development**

## **Schools**

The initial plan for the elementary school at International Village anticipated a school population of approximately 350. Now the School Board is planning for a school population of 510. This larger structure requires that the foundation for the Firenze residential complex be re-enforced. Construction has been delayed pending negotiation of satisfactory arrangements with Firenze for this work. We are all hoping that these negotiations can be completed soon, so that construction can begin in time for a projected 2016 school opening.

Seismic up-grades for Lord Strathcona Elementary have finally been approved. This limits capacity for that school to accommodate neighbourhood children. As a result, our children will be attending Admiral Seymour School, with Out-of-school care coordinated with neighbouring Ray-Cam Community Cooperative Centre.

## **Parks**

In addition to our work lobbying for Creekside Park, the FCRA has been involved with the Park Board in preserving and enhancing existing park space. We have formed an Andy Livingston Park Working Group, which includes senior representatives from the Park Board staff and the Vancouver Police Department. Priorities for Andy Livingston Park include:

- improving protection from cyclists for pedestrians and children around the paved pedestrian walkways

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- promoting the use of the dog park and improving the off leash area with respect to lighting.
- ensuring the green space is safe for children, i.e. no dog feces, used syringes, or other threats to health and safety
- activating the park for various programmed sport and recreational uses
- assisting city officials to find permanent homes or shelter for people who use the park overnight or as an unsupervised injection site.

We are looking forward to continuing this work with the newly elected Park Board.

As a result of our input into the allocation of the Community Amenity Contributions for 5B East, \$400,000 was allocated for the renewal of the playground in the north corner of the Creekside Park meadow. Staff are currently developing the new playground design and location. Also under reconsideration is the route of the bike path to insure both a safer play area for children, as well as improved pedestrian safety. An Open House is planned for December 3, 4 pm to 7 pm at the Creekside Community Centre. You may also provide feedback on line at [vancouver.ca](http://vancouver.ca) from December 3rd to December 15th.

## **Viaducts**

We understand that the City is proceeding with various studies to support viaduct removal. However, there has been no communication on this subject. We do know that Concord Pacific donated \$250,000 to the City of Vancouver for feasibility work. However, there is no community accountability built into the City's planning process. We continue to question how much more density will be promised to pay the anticipated \$25,000,000 price tag for viaduct removal.

## **Plaza of Nations**

Last year we reported that there has been no progress with this development that includes a community centre, indoor soccer, and ice rink. Again, we regret informing you that there has been no progress made in resolving the issues that stand in the way of this development.

## **Social Media**

This year the FCRA has devoted considerable time and energy to creating our presence on Facebook and Twitter. We are also animating our web site to be a more dynamic and current source of information.

Follow us on twitter: @falsecreekres

Check us out on Facebook

Use our web site as your homepage: [www.falsecreekresidents.org](http://www.falsecreekresidents.org)

Both the web site and our Facebook page provide opportunities for residents to post issues, concerns, comments and suggestions.

Keep in touch!

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