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Rebel with a Clause



Rebel with a Clause Vision party falling apart at the seams

By ALEX G. TSAKUMIS

The regime change in Vancouver, I thought, would be better us.

There would be an end to enduring partisan horse manure and the city I am passionately in love with would, indeed, see brighter days.

Well, I'm a little worried again.

We may have sainted Gregor Robertson for his hitherto competent performance. However, I am growingly apprehensive as to how much he will be able to cap the demons within his own party and continue to ride the political middle road - the lynchpin for re-election.

Case in point: The Vision Vancouver parks board loons have come almost totally unglued.

If it isn't Vision poll-topper Constance Barnes' frighteningly bizarre behaviour at various events, or parks chair Raj Hundal's enthusiasm for hearing the sound of his own voice, or commissioner Sarah Blythe's exclusively blithe and wholly meaningless recent hunger-strike grandstanding - the Vision parks "team" is totally rudderless and painfully confused.

And now, they are about to become very costly - all at your expense.

Back in November of 2008, the previous parks board voted in favour of awarding The Celebration Pavilion at Queen Elizabeth Park to some qualified folks, who also expertly run wedding chapels in Richmond and Stanley Park.

The recommendation was strongly made in a lengthy parks' staff report. And although the vote to approve was passed, CUPE Local 15 (lead by Vision supporter Paul Faoro) immediately launched an all-out attack through the Labour Relations Board to have The Chapel at Stanley Park Group, the winning bidder of four, declared a "concession" operator, to presumably force them into hiring only union workers - all on the specious argument of lost hours, etc.

Unfortunately for the union, their entire, pathetic argument was demolished by parks staff, which was left wondering what on earth the union was yammering about.

Oh, but what a difference a few months makes ...

Now, with Vision in control, instead of seeking multi-partisanship and goodwill, the parks board is embracing doctrines of appalling bias: An otherwise clear-thinking performer, Vision commissioner Aaron Jasper, has forwarded a motion, with no previous consultation with the contractor, to rescind its management of the pavilion.

There is no specific word from Jasper as to what the Vision-dominated Board would do instead, and it has ignored staff reports allaying their "concerns."

Interesting, too, that the sit-down before the Labour Board between the contractor and the union, scheduled for last week, was cancelled at the last minute, because the union (are you seated?) pulled out.

When was the last bloody time any union pulled away from anything? Beginning to do the math?

Vision parks commissioners cut a backroom deal with the union to toss a competent contractor, all based on shameless, philosophical games that will cost you extra, in a down economy, and land the parks board in court.

It wasn't hard, considering COPE's Loretta Woodcock, a left-over from the previous board, is spinning this mindlessness with all sorts of pretentious nonsense, when it's clear: Forget taxpayers - shill for the union.

Commissioner Jasper cries about "affordability," but admitted he doesn't even have a feasibility study supporting Vision's position.

This is responsible economic stewardship?

Betty Burnett, the contractor, was clear: "We have done exceptional work. They claim they can charge half what we do, but they are offering

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not even one-third the services. We're going to sue them, no question"

Who wouldn't?

And former parks chair, commissioner Ian Robertson, the lone NPA survivor on the board, and widely touted as a possible future mayor, put it best: "I'm really disappointed with Vision and COPE Commissioners ... they promised inclusion and what's best for due process ... maybe these clowns should follow the example of my 'cousin' Gregor, who seems to be doing a fair job, so far ..."

Small potatoes you say?

Add it to flagrant pumping for the NDP by some Vision council members and the Vision School Board chair's despicable backing of the BCTF's insane position on standardized tests, and you clearly see what costly political payback could be coming, in droves, and all at your extra expense.

If "cousin" Gregor doesn't put a lid on the left-wingnuts in his party, maybe the nameplate on the door in three years will still read 'Mayor Robertson.' But it'll just be a different Scotsman.

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