

Re: 1201 Fort Street Development Proposal

Dear Mayor and Council:

Sometimes I feel like the Fool in Shakespeare's "King Lear", trying earnestly to warn the King against his own actions, his own madness. A Fool who believes the kingdom is slipping into disarray. The King has awarded his lands and power to his two false daughters and husbands only because they openly profess their love for him. They are not good stewards of the land, or the Kingdom. The play ends in tragedy.

It occurred to me the other day, that the real problem with the Crease Property is that it has too many trees. It does not conform to the "one-style-fits-all" mantra of the developers. It does not look like downtown. It is not filled with buildings.

"Build, build, build", is what they chant in a chorus. Our City Staff seems to suffer from the same cancerous thinking. At best, it could be described as "Group Think." Imagine what they would do to Beacon Hill Park, given the chance?

Thankfully, Beacon Hill Park is legally protected, a sanctuary, protected in our little part of the bigger world which seems to be spinning out of control. In these plans and City's Staff recommendation, trees are nothing more than decoration, to be pushed about in pots and planted in thin soil.

According to the OCP, Victoria is "recognized for its high quality of life, heritage, physical beauty, character and charm." (page 13). In any book, the first few pages are the principles on which the book expounds. Everything flows from these opening statements. Does the OCP say that all trees must be cut down? That the design mould for downtown fits all neighbourhoods? It does not.

It goes on to emphasize "stable neighbourhoods...preservation of environmental quality...a greener city...ecological integrity...beautiful natural setting...walk-able neighbourhoods of unique character...human-scaled neighbourhoods". On page 22, it states, "...as Victoria grows, it will be challenged to maintain remnant ecosystems and environmental quality."

The opening words in the OCP are fine words indeed. They do profess City Staff's love for nature.

But, they are only words. They become false words, unless they are backed by concrete action. Our ecological integrity needs to be protected, and can only be well protected in residential neighbourhoods of unique character. Trees are not just decoration. This proposal is too big, too massive, too high, and the set-backs are negligible.

The community of people opposed to the overwhelming size of this development proposal are not a band of surly jesters moping about, in our floppy boots and eccentric caps jingling our bells, in an unlit backstage of some tawdry theatre. We are citizens who have elected you as are our representatives to ensure we protect what is unique in our city as we progress into the future.. We do not need more "downtown" in our unique residential areas. This proposal does not fit the site. Do not confuse any and all building development as progress.

Thank you.

Don Cal

Regulatory Capture

Regulatory capture is a form of government failure that occurs when a regulatory agency, created to act in the public interest, instead advances the commercial or political concerns of special interest groups that dominate the industry or sector it is charged with regulating. (source: Wikipedia)