

In the forty-two years that I've been a voter in this city, I have never exercised my right to stand in these chambers and address the Mayor and Council. That I do so today is a measure of how important the issue of over-development in this city has become. I have trusted that council will see the serious damage that is being done to the present community, and to that of the future. My trust has been shaken by the rush of badly designed and poorly built condominiums that have grown like stark, ugly, grey and brown mushrooms in this city over the last few years. It is my responsibility as a citizen and custodian of this beautiful place to ensure that something of its beauty remains for my children's children.

I have watched and reviewed the development at 1201 Fort Street since its inception several years ago. I have watched the developer stone-wall. I have watched him use pro-active jargon to try to convince you and me that his way is the responsible way. But in fact, his way is greed. He has used skewed graphics to try to convince his audience that green space will be saved, when in fact, existing lawns will be largely covered in concrete. He's told us that he'll plant scores of new trees to replace the 31 which he will kill. But these new 'trees' are no more than shrubs planted in two feet of soil in planters. This is but one instance of his on-going betrayal of this city. What others will he perpetrate if you allow this development to go ahead?

Counsel is being deliberately misled by developers like this one. And either you are succumbing to bullying, or you are willfully ignoring the duplicitous machinations of people whose care for the future is limited to the size of their profits.

Yes, we need development! Yes, we need more rental properties! But we need you to ensure that they are built mindful of the fragility of

the existing infrastructure, and mindful of the fragility of the overall environment in which we all exist..

More even than the individual citizens who sit here tonight, YOU are responsible for demanding that developers present projects which are suited to their situations.

Keep developments like these to the downtown core, which ends at Cook Street. Allowing this development to go ahead so deeply within a residential area will allow the creep of concrete to continue until the very reason why the New York Times saw fit to laud Victoria as a place of charm and peace will be visible only in history books. And counselors like you will be vilified for allowing it to so wantonly take place.

Take the lead. Tell developers that their plans will be welcomed when they can show that they honestly have the best and greenest future of this city in mind. Let them present buildings which fit seamlessly into their environments, which respect green space in a real way, which use the existing infrastructure within its proper limits. There are plenty of them around this city! You won't see them easily, of course, because they FIT. They don't stick out like concrete monoliths blotting this glorious landscape.

Take the lead. Allow careful and responsible development. Turn down Abstract's plans for 1201 Fort Street.