

NEWS RELEASE

2014-10-11

'CNV Gone Wild'

Morris for Mayor's Campaign Response to the City's Press Release dated October 8th 2014.

The City alleges that: *"...mayoral candidate Mr. Kerry Morris stated that the Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Ken Tollstam, acted illegally by threatening him with legal action for defamation."*

This allegation is untruthful. At no time ever did Morris accuse Mr. Tollstam of acting illegally. The City has mischaracterized the words set out in Morris' October 8th 2014 North Shore News article to which the City's News Release makes reference. A copy of that North Shore News article is attached as a link: http://kerrymorris.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/SCANS_003-014.pdf.

The City goes on to say: *"In reality, it was not Mr. Tollstam, but Mr. Morris who acted illegally by making false and defamatory statements about two City staff members."*

Again, the City's allegation is untruthful. At no time ever did Morris defame the two City staff members in question. The City mischaracterized Morris' words to impute misconduct on the part of those employees. The decision to mischaracterize Morris' statement was taken by the City, not by Morris. A copy of the City's letter to Morris dated July 22, 2014, as signed by CNV CAO Ken Tollstam is attached: http://kerrymorris.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/SCANS_007-008.pdf.

The City's News Release further states: *"...In a campaign press release issued on July 20, 2014, Mr. Morris falsely stated that two City staff members, assistants to the Mayor, were engaging in dishonest and unethical conduct."*

Once again, the above allegation is untruthful. At no time ever did Morris make this statement orally or in writing, or in any other communication medium. The City has mischaracterized what Morris wrote claiming it was an attack on City staff, when in fact, it was not. Morris has made it abundantly clear that at no time ever did he *"...mean to suggest any unethical conduct or impropriety on the part of City of North Vancouver staff."* Morris is of the opinion this is simply a tactic to draw attention away from the Mayor's conduct.

The City's News Release then goes on to say: *"...Mr. Tollstam advised Mr. Morris that his statements were not only false and defamatory, but wrongly imputed dishonesty, misconduct and inferior character to City Staff."*

Morris agrees that Mr. Tollstam made these allegations. However, the allegations were a mischaracterization and not an accurate reflection of what Morris wrote in his July 20th 2014 Press Release. To say that the City is stretching the boundaries of rational interpretation regarding what Morris wrote, is to be overly kind.

The City's News Release then goes on to state: *"...In Mr. Morris' ad which appeared today he stated that it was illegal for Mr. Tollstam to issue him this warning."* (See October 8th 2014 NSN article)

Once again, the above allegation is completely and entirely untruthful. At no time ever did Morris make this assertion.

In open council chambers on Monday October 6th 2014, a question was put to City staff regarding precisely how much money had been spent on legal services in the fiscal year 2013. The answer given by staff was \$601,632. The amount spent on legal services in 2013 equals 1.5% of the City's total operating budget. The CAO then admitted that authority for any legal cost over \$2,000 must be 'signed off' by the CAO's office.

The City refused to disclose any details regarding the use and need for these expenditures, choosing instead to hide behind a claim of confidentiality and legal privilege

(Authorized and approved by the candidate KerryMorris as financial agent for the campaign)

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While the North Shore News ad of October 8th 2014 made reference to the fact that Morris had been threatened with a law suit, as The City's News Release now admits, the ad dealt principally with the fact that Morris was not the only person who had been threatened with a law suit and that indeed a number of public figures had received similar threats.

When asked to confirm his source of information, Morris said: ***"...I do not make this allegation blindly. I have consulted with a past North Vancouver City Mayor who has informed me of these facts."*** Morris asserts:

1. Upon taking office, one of the first decisions that Mayor was confronted with was a request for recovery of legal costs incurred in relation to legal actions contemplated against a long service member of council.
2. The incoming Mayor was told that the outgoing Mayor had also been confronted with a similar request to approve these charges but that the outgoing Mayor had refused to authorize reimbursement.
3. That Mayor told Morris that, not wanting to start the relationship with the City's CAO off on bad footing, it was agreed that cost recovery of the CAO's legal expense incurred in relation to that long service member of council would be allowed. The matter never went before the full council for approval.

Morris has also been made aware that at least one other member of council was similarly threatened with legal action by the City, which threat occurred much more recently than the events described in points 1 through 3 above. Evidently the matter in question resulted from inappropriate comments made and tape recorded during a telephone conversation. Morris says there are various other examples involving both councillors and staff.

The October 8th North Shore News ad, placed by Morris, questions whether it is appropriate, or a good use of taxpayer dollars, to threaten legal action against elected and unelected officials, citizens and City employees.

The upcoming Mayoral election is all about a change of management styles and skills. It's about morality and integrity. One of the many issues City residents need to consider is how we spend our money and whether those expenditures represent a good and appropriate use of our scarce financial resources. Morris has staked out his territory on this issue and makes it abundantly clear he believes the City needs a change of direction.

We have gone from a City Hall where employees, once hired, became lifelong members of one big happy family, to a revolving-door employer, whereas one City employee told Morris only 40 days ago, ***"...I've had three managers in the last year alone."***

Could it be that excessive litigious activity, on the part of the City, in relation to elected officials, employees and residents, evidenced by \$600k in legal expenses in 2013, is the reason for the rounded heels of our City staff.

In my opinion, the CAO's response is designed to deflect attention away from an unhealthy management style and labour environment. As time immemorial has proven, there is no better method to draw attention away from what you are doing, than to start a war someplace else.

We need a new CEO in the Mayor's chair who doesn't allow elected and unelected officials, City residents or staff to suffer under constant threat of legal action at the flip of a coin. I long for the stable management characteristics and common sense thinking of the Jack Loucks era. On November 15th:

VOTE: 'Morris for Mayor'

'For A Better Tomorrow'

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