

MORE OF MORE OF THE SAME

By: Kerry Morris - (December 3, 2014)

All across the province, new municipal councils were sworn in effective December 1st, the first 4 year term of office for these positions ever before possible.

The Districts of North and West Vancouver both saw uncontested reappointments of their respective Mayors. While incumbent mayor Darrell Mussatto was returned to office in The City of North Vancouver, his re-election came with a majority of only 52%, hardly a clear mandate for change.

During the swearing in ceremony, Mayor Mussatto twice stumbled over the oath of office administered by Chief Justice Hinkson.

The issue now confronting the mayor is

his need to bestow benefit on all those in the development community who financially supported his election campaign versus his legal obligation not to allow any private interest to influence his conduct, a condition which many claim has been a real problem throughout in his last two terms.



Mussatto's inaugural council address could be likened to a thrown speech as he regaled the list of priorities he planned to deliver on. The list includes the Brooks vision for the water front, more development at or above the pace and scale of the last few years, support for a new tax on lower Lonsdale businesses, sale of school buildings and fields, but not public fields or parks, more investment in Lonsdale Energy, a secondary suite and coach-house for every property owner and less tolerance for voices speaking out in opposition. Clearly he sees his election victory as a mandate for more of the same, as oppose to any need to govern from the centre.

Mussatto also singled councillor Buchanan out for special treatment as the new Chair of a special community charter committee of the City. The objectives of that committee were wide ranging but imprecise in definition. Many in attendance took it as a signal that Linda Buchanan would receive a green-light to run as Darrell's appointed mayoral replacement in the next municipal election cycle, signalling Mussatto's intent to leave municipal politics within 4 years.

Those who succeeded in re-election to City council but do not find themselves a part of the Mussatto 'Slate' are most assuredly headed into the frigid environment of the outnumbered. Their opinions will be heard and then discarded, and it will be anything but fun.

The question on everyone's mind is Holly Back. Will she become a Mussatto/Keating wall flower, falling into line with the same lack of independence shown by Linda Buchanan these past 3 years, or will she stray and become her own person. Obviously, from Mussatto's state of the union speech, he believes he has lock-step control of her every vote, but others think it is only a matter of time before she goes rogue, if not commando.

Time will be the great determinant in this regard but in the interim, I think it is safe to say that we're in for more Traffic, Condos, Development, Ferris wheels and outdoor Ice-rinks than we ever dreamed were possible. For the 48% who came close but lost out, this has all the earmarkings of the most frustrating period in our little City's 108 year history. Will this final term of Mussatto mania be the one that drives long standing residents to leave for more pleasant pastures? This is the question yet to be answered. But what is certain is that the 70% of eligible voters who failed to vote, have lost the right to complain about anything, at least for the next 4 years.