

IS THERE A REASON HARRY JEROME HAS BEEN CUT ADRIFT ?

By: Kerry Morris



Could it be that Harry Jerome's downgrading of importance in the City's capital planning process is due to a Mussatto 'Slate' plan to toss H.J. on the garbage heap, so the existing site can be transformed by friendly developers into dense housing towers? And what is to become of the Rec-Services that Harry Jerome provides to the North Shore generally?

These are questions of significance to all North Shore residents, those concerned about the survival of the Rec-Commission, and the union employees who could lose their jobs, or they should be?

Monday nights council meeting, in its closed door session, will consider a staff report to buy from Telus, the piece of property located at Lonsdale on the land wedge between East 8th and 11th streets, which is currently used to park Telus vehicles. The intended purpose of this land wedge is to construct a new 25 meter swimming pool, replacing the worn-out H.J. pool, whose maintenance costs have skyrocketed.

The City has received a firm price offer from Telus, to sell the City the property, but Telus won't be selling the existing 3 story building located at the East end of the site. That property contains telecommunications systems employed by the Telus' land-line phone network, and as those systems and networks have transitioned to a sunset business, the cost of moving those systems can't be justified, so they will remain on that site until the land-line system goes the way of the Dodo bird.

What will the proposed Telus 25 meter pool include? The list of what it won't include is far longer. It won't include a 50 meter pool. It won't include Gym facilities, weight training rooms or a health centre. It will have very little if any public parking, which as the Mayor and 'Slate' will tell you, is unnecessary as we are now a walkable / bike friendly community without need of cars or car parking. Where will the remaining Harry Jerome facilities go? Well that poses some of the most interesting questions of all!

Next door to the new pool, in the old BlueShore Financial Building, now deep into renovations by its owners WesGroup, has the all new Trevor Lindon Health Club facility under construction. This was confirmed by City staff Friday when I was told "...that famous Guy, Trevor Linden is the owner...". However, the only document available to the public is one which omits reference to Linden but confirms the architect as David Danyluck and the use as 'T.L. New Fitness Club'.

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Number: BLD2015-08895 Status: Received

Name: DAVID DANYLUCK ARCHITECT
Received Date: 3/18/2015 9:59:25 AM
Issued Date:
Parcel: 015-137-376
Address: 1100 LONSDALE
Description: T.L. New Fitness Club

Activities	Type	Requested	Scheduled	Completed	Activity Status
Application Received		3/18/2015	9/18/2015		
Completion Deposit		3/18/2015			
Plumbing Permit Required					
Electrical Permit Required					
Review by Plan Checker		3/18/2015	5/1/2015		SEND
Issue Invoice		3/18/2015			
Issue Invoice		3/23/2015		3/23/2015	DONE
Route to Fire		3/27/2015	5/8/2015		SEND

With a high profile and well loved sports figure like Trevor Linden, providing a private sector offering equal to or better than any the City could hope to provide, a fact which is well known to the 'Slate', given their close association with the development community and in particular WesGroup, is this the beginning of a well organized plan to dispose of the City's unionized Harry Jerome staff members working for the Rec-Commission?

If the need for a new swimming pool at Harry Jerome is answered by the Telus site, with a naming-rights amenity contribution in trade for a lower capital cost, and the health centre product moves to Trevor Linden's facility next door, removing the need for such services in the neighbouring public facility, what happens to the ice-rink, flicka gymnastics and the rest of the Harry Jerome's service offering? Thats the real story, and a number of pieces fell into place this past Thursday night at the City's Pipe Shop bridal fair event. The Mayor let his hair down and began to brag, and what was said was very interesting.

How Could The Mayor's Vision Affect You?

It was Thursday night at the Shipyard Lands, and the Pipe Shop, which is scheduled to be the new home of the North Shore Museum and Archives facility, currently a resident of Presentation House, was playing host to a Quay Property Management social event designed to attract Wedding Planners to use the facility in the interim while the Museum acquires donors for the project. As an uninvited guest, I was only able to attend briefly but hung about until Mayor Darrell Mussatto and councillors Linda Buchanan, Holly Back and Don Bell arrived and blended into the crowd. The Mayor's girlfriend was also on hand for the festivities. Neither Bookham, Clark nor Keating were in attendance.

The Mayor, who was characterized by several in the crowd as extremely giddy, as if he'd had a little too much of the bubbly, offer up for all who would listen what '*...I'm going to do at the shipyard...*'. With each detailed description, the word "*...I...*" became a reoccurring theme as he regaled the changes which were underway as a result of his '*...Vision...*'. When he began to speak about the intended uses for the Pipe Shop, a question arose regarding the City's commitment for the Pipe Shop to become the Museum. Darrell's response; "*...Not going to happen!*"

He went on to describe a new 17,000 sq/ft ice-rink at the Shipyards, to replace the Harry Jerome facility, and various other parts of his vision for the Shipyard Lands. He told the audience, in ear-shot, that he was in discussions with Seaspan to construct a new 'Floating Swimming Pool' to be located adjacent to the pier, out front of the Shipyards.

Could this be the reason that Harry Jerome has been left out of the 50 year anniversary celebrations planned for Centennial Theater? Has our beloved Harry Jerome gone from 'Shovel-Ready' to the scrap heap in a series of decisions made before and since the election only 5 1/2 months ago? Will Harry Jerome's existing pool move to the 100 block of Lonsdale, between 8th and 11th? Will the Harry Jerome ice-rink move to the shipyards? Will the Harry Jerome health centre services be satisfied by a private sector solution? All this is certainly possible, and the first decision that will see the domino effect begin will be made in-camera on Monday night. So, like me, you need to keep your ear to the ground and your eye's wide open, as the Mayor sets about turning '*...His Vision...*' into our reality, with your money!

Questions Abound:

How is the Shipyard project to be financed? That's a most interesting question. The City is currently seeking expressions of interest to design, develop and construct the Site 5, amenity which in some variation will resemble the Roger Brooks plan. The speculation is that the successful proposal will include a Gaming Casino operated by none other than **UNION BUSTER** Playtime, the Mayor's new best friend. The second floor is believed to be intended for expanded convention centre facilities, operated by Pinnacle. One estimate claims the new building will include an additional four stories of hotel rooms atop the Gaming and convention centre facility, blocking the remaining views of the waterfront for Atrium property owners. All this is intended to be connected to the existing Pinnacle Hotel by a bridge crossing over ShipBuilders Way, connecting the second level of the Pinnacle Hotel as referenced in the Brooks Report, to the new convention space. And parking? Who needs parking, we're a walkable community!

What happens to the Harry Jerome site? Is it to be sold off to developers and will it likely end-up becoming home to buildings ranging in height from 3 to 24 floors, depending on the auction proceeds made available to Darrell and Keating, neither of whom plan to run in the next election? Is this the hidden reward for all those Courthouse Area residents who supported the 'Slate' in the last election? And what becomes of the City's unionized staff displaced by Harry Jerome's demise? Could it be that NDP president Craig Keating plans to give them all a one-way ticket on the Tom Nellis good-bye union party-bus? There is little in this plan for District residents so could it also bring an end to the Rec-Commission?