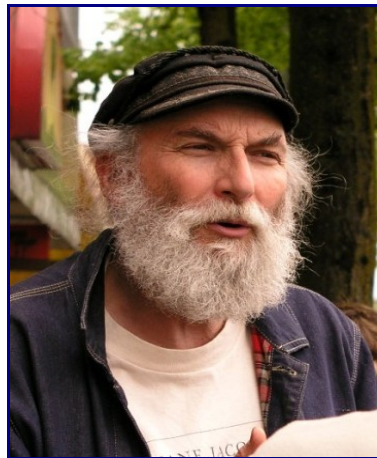


A PRESENTATION GIVEN ON MAY 24th AT THE HELLENIC COMMUNITY CENTRE
NEIGHBOURHOODS IN CRISIS WITH SPOT REZONING!



Patrick M. Condon



Ned Jacobs



Lewis N. Villegas

Speaker - Patrick M. Condon, Senior Researcher with the Design Centre for Sustainability??Professor Condon told of his concern about the present state of the environment and the need to plan for a better world for our children and grandchildren. ?He asked how the City of Vancouver would reduce our emissions by 2050, when if we continue to follow the path we are on, will double in the next 40 years as the population grows.?He presented his students with the problem and asked them to develop a plan for the city. Rather than continue to make roads for cars and buses, which use dirty fuel, they proposed that every third street be given over to bikeways and walkways. As well, they proposed an electric tram system that would run on the surface of the roads and which would connect neighbourhoods. Not only would the trams be much cleaner, but they would also be much cheaper in cost. At present, the Skytrain costs about \$250 million per kilometer, whereas a tram cost only \$25 million per kilometer to construct.

Ned Jacobs - Spokesperson for Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver??Mr. Jacobs proposed that there are better ways of housing people in a city, than by tearing down existing housing, or building high rises. He feels that at present, politicians, planners and developers are making the decisions about the way in which Vancouver is being developed, without public input. Therefore, bad decisions are being made. He suggests that Vancouver is already a well planned city, and not a dysfunctional one that needs to be re-planned. There are already distinct neighbourhoods that people want to preserve, and keep the character of.?He cited Kitsilano as a neighbourhood that was going to be redeveloped with high rise building and be a continuation of downtown, but due to public pressure, these plans were downsized to allow only low rise apartments, and to permit house owners to renovate and raise their home to accommodate more people. Lower rise apartments were also built in Arbutus Walk, instead of high rises, because of advocacy and public pressure. ?Changes came in city planning with Mayor Sam Sullivan who believed that Ecodensity was the way to go, and did not need public input. The Ecodensity plan, driven by developers, and the pressure of buyers from Asia has caused Vancouver to be one of the most expensive cities in the world. Affordability of housing is out of control and even well paid citizens with good jobs will not come to live here because of the expense of

housing. Developers are asked to include public amenities such as community centres, libraries and daycares, when they build condo developments, instead of the city of Vancouver building the amenities from city taxes. This can lead to conflict of interest situations, with developers getting councillors on side to okay a development, by donating sums of money to their election campaigns. Both NPA and VISION have been given funds from developers in order to encourage them to vote in favour of their developments.

Lewis Villegas - An Urban Design Specialist?He asks the question, " Do we have to build high rises to get high density?"?He shows examples from major cities across Canada where they have achieved a higher density, without building high rises. These examples included :-??Vancouver - Houses known locally as, "Vancouver Specials," were built so that all of the interior space could be used for housing people. they include a mortgage helper suite, are in fee simple, have front and rear access, and required no land assembly.?Montreal and Charlottetown - Houses were brick built, side to side and back to back, with windows next to the street.?Dartmouth - Salt box houses which are small buildings on small lots, close together.?Toronto - Houses are directly on the street with no front yard, no back lanes, are back to back and side to side.?Halifax - an explosion damaged one third of the town, so when rebuilding, they built houses in rows separated by boulevards. These connect to parks and were used to connect people to the street cars. Most people were only a few blocks from transportation, and werre a magnet for people.?Quebec City - In The Citadel area, they built smaller blocks with homes connected at sides and backs. this gave them one hundred units per acre, which is the same as high rise tower density, but is on a human scale where people feel connected to one another.?Winnipeg - Warehouses were converted into apartments which gave a density of 25,000 people, instead of tearing down the existing neighbourhoods.?Montreal - They built small houses on small lots, on small street. These were affordable, gave a density of sixteen thousand people in an acre, and gave people a human scale to live with, where neighbours knew their neighbourhoods.??The above examples of row housing are ILLEGAL in Vancouver. By row housing is meant - high density, human scale, can be sold individually without a strata.?Streets with high density housing, on a human scale, produces more social networking between neighbours, than do high rises.

In 1995, the City of Vancouver embarked on City Plan to bring planning to the community level. Residents were surveyed and volunteer committees in each community worked with members of the City's Planning Department to develop the 20 year plans. The committees worked tirelessly on traffic and transportation, community safety and services, residential areas, new housing, neighbourhood centres, parks and public places, and community involvement in decision making.

So why are neighbourhoods now in crisis? Because, in 2007, along came Eco-Density which was brought forward by the previous NPA Council. Although the current Visions Vancouver Council promised to reconsider Eco-density, they have proceeded to implement the initial actions and added more. What did this mean for our neighbourhoods? Any area can be spot rezoned or mass rezoned for high-rise condos. Ask the community associations in Norquay, Marpole, West End, Chinatown, Southlands, Mount Pleasant, Cambie, Kerrisdale, Shaughnessy, Downtown Eastside, Kitsilano and our own neighbourhood, Arbutus Ridge!

Vancouver needs to have neighbourhood-based planning processes that are respected!

Arbutus Ridge Concerned Citizens Association

604-263-6051

arcca@shaw.ca