

Friends of Island View Beach
By email from
FriendsOfIslandViewBeach@gmail.com

November 16, 2015

The Board of Directors
Capital Regional District
By mail

Re: ***Island View train wreck***

The CRD has scheduled next Saturday for public input to a new management plan for Island View Beach Regional Park. The process has been flawed from the start, with the public being fed incomplete, misleading information; exaggerated environmental claims; and being denied critical information needed to make an informed, thoughtful and rational presentation.

The statutory purpose of a regional district is:

(a) providing good government for its community [Local Government Act. S.2]

During the last 5 years we have dealt with 3 CRD Boards who had the commonality that when told how the CRD was misleading the public, would bury their head in the sand in the hope it would go away. But it got worse because of the vacuum created by the Directors failure to govern and make reasonable inquiry*.

In January 2013 the CRD put on a public information session where every display board was false or misleading. <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/2013-january-public-session.html>

In September 2013 the CRD released a draft interim plan that was riddled with false and misleading statements to such a degree it was difficult to believe these could be accidental. <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/misleading-claims.html>

In May 2014 the CRD Regional Parks Committee ordered an environmental assessment of the park that was to be "*factual technical and scientific*". Instead, what was released 8 months later in January 2015, was still inaccurate..

- We wrote to staff pointing out the obvious errors.
- When staff refused to correct the errors we wrote to you, and we appeared before the Parks Committee, urging that the CRD check its facts before going to the public. You put your head in the sand and did nothing.
- We went back to staff multiple times asking them to give evidence for their claims. They refused.
- We made an FOI request in July 2015 for evidence to support the environmental claims by the CRD – and as of November 15, 2015, we still have not been provided with that!

See this correspondence at <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/letters-to-the-crd-in-2015.html>

Instead of taking steps to ensure the public were given the full, unbiased facts so they could make an informed decision about the park, you allowed a culture to fester where we were smeared and personal attacks were made on us. This because we had the temerity to ask the CRD to check the facts before going to the public.

We have warned you repeatedly that the environmental presentation prepared by the CRD is incomplete, misleading and plain wrong, and that no reasonable person will be able to come to an informed opinion from it, yet you failed to act. Was this good governance for our community that you promised to serve?

- There is reason to believe the CRD exaggerated the number of “at risk” species in and around the park.
- No analysis was given by the CRD of the at risk species in the park, to show where they are; if they require protection, and if so from what and when.
- The CRD has refused to provide the public with evidence to substantiate its claims about the at risk species in or around the park.
- Climate change is the greatest threat to the park and the species in it, yet, astonishingly, no climate change study was done by the CRD, despite the direction from the BC Ministry of Environment in 2009, that it is important to integrate climate change into management considerations. Much of Island View Beach is at sea level, so any rise in sea level will impact there first. Likewise a rise in temperature will impact native species in the park. These climate changes are no longer some vague possibility in the future, they are occurring right now, with 2015 being the hottest summer on record, and massive changes in weather patterns occurring on our shores.
- There is a report that the American Bullfrog has been identified in the park. This will impact the species there, and needs to be studied.

See our Environmental Assessment at <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/environment.html>

Island View Beach Regional Park is one of the most popular and heavily used parks in the Capital Region, with hundreds of thousands of visits each year. You have a duty of fairness to the public that you cannot shrug off, because a biased, incorrect or incomplete environmental assessment may lead to restricted access to the park for the thousands of people who rely on it. That duty of fairness is heightened by your promise that the environmental assessment would be factual, technical and scientific; a promise which many of the public relied on, and some believe was not met.

The BC Court of Appeal has ruled in many similar decisions, and their message is clear - the CRD must disclose all the information it has so that interested parties can make informed, thoughtful and rational presentations. If you fail to do this then any actions you take can be overturned. See <http://www.friendsofislandviewbeach.com/bc-court-of-appeal.html>

It is too late now to rectify the process. Even if the CRD produced the missing information, and came up with a climate study this week, there is no way to get that to the public and for them to absorb it before Saturday.

Good governance requires that you postpone the public meeting on Saturday. To proceed would be a train wreck, even by CRD standards.

Restart the environmental process with an independent environmental professional such as Matt Fairbarns; have the environmental research done thoroughly and objectively, and that will lead logically to a new park plan that will be understood and supported by the public. That is your duty to the people of the region.

Yours truly,

The Friends of Island View Beach

* *In these 5 years, only two CRD directors have stepped forward and made their own inquiry of us, and we acknowledge them with appreciation. **Director Hicks** who toured the park with us in November 2013, and **Director Plant** who inspected our material and asked questions in July 2015.*

*We also acknowledge with appreciation, Directors **Hamilton** and Director **Ranns** who took the time to acknowledge our messages.*