

Initial Feedback for North Westside Governance Study

June 22, 2022

This initial feedback is being offered and submitted to the North Westside Governance Study public meeting to be held in the Killiney Beach Community Hall on June 22, 2022.

At this point we would like to thank Alan the consultant to this Governance Study, as he has been very professional and helpful while being clear in an unbiased manner in the public meetings we have attended. We certainly support his efforts in working with the Committee and the public.

Initially the two of us wanted to attend all the meetings at the Hall (which we have to date), gather facts and information about things related to the questionnaire offered there in the first meeting on June 8, 2022, ponder them, and finally offer our thoughts and suggestions. Unfortunately, at the first meeting and in subsequent conversations in the second meeting, something somewhat disturbing could be seen as apparently occurring: a number of the committee members appear impatient to skip to the next step with some stating clearly their intentions to get on with something which would not occur until this current study is completed and the next step initiated (which would require another necessary grant).

Therefore, after this note is submitted, we will attend the last two meetings (including the June 22, 2022 meeting) then offer our thoughts, suggestions, and feedback as Feedback #2 at a later date.

Full disclosure: we have talked and communicated with Alan the consultant and realize all input is public, and can be discussed with anyone. We therefore are both submitting our names and signatures at the end. We have been informed we are allowed to give copies of these submissions to those we wish to as – once again – the proceedings and submissions are public.

And please note that we consider “jumping ahead” to a next step before seeking and considering the feedback and suggestions of the community as a whole as related to the current study to be inappropriate at this time. We would suggest a complete study of the community input confined to the scope of the current mandate be judiciously considered and submitted first and foremost, without any bias towards a potential future outcome.

Point 1:

One of the committee members stated they made a submission/talk to the North Okanagan Regional District which that committee member said was accepted to the point that "they" would be happy to take the North Westside. Interesting. Several questions arise from that statement, including, but not limited to: was there a resolution passed at that NORD meeting? Was this put in writing by NORD? Was NORD staff present and did they comment? Did NORD staff offer any suggestions? Was this the complete NORD Board or? And – as Regional Districts regularly communicate - was there any pre- or subsequent communications concerning the history, the rationale, the costs, and the cautions that needed to be done prior to any unequivocal support? In writing?

Point 2:

One committee member seemed to imply right after face-to-face conversation was initiated that that person had already made up their mind and was going to support the North Westside going to NORD. When questioned about that, the replying quote was something to the effect that everyone that person talked to wanted to do that. It was noted that (I, we) were currently not in favor of that (after all, we do want to listen first), and obviously that person had not talked to us prior to that public meeting! As an aside, we talked to other people outside of the meeting, and they were quite adamant they were not in favor of NORD and preferred the RDCO!!

Now in all fairness, we did not get our interviewees to sign anything, as we suspect that committee member has not either. The point is – this current study is a serious business and should be focused on as such. If any committee member is desirous of "just getting on to the part they want to get to" (our quotes) they are not treating this current study seriously, nor serving their community fairly and seriously.

Point 3:

One committee member stated clearly that they had tried to get information out of the RDCO and got stonewalled. Interesting. Did the RDCO offer any reason? Were there legalities involved? Was there perhaps costly time and effort involved and was the questioner willing to pay? Perhaps was there something the RDCO could initiate to explain to those less educated in matters like this what had gone on (and was the person or community willing to agree to financing any such undertaking?). And – did the RDCO provide an answer which the questioner was just not willing to accept?

Two things here: if a plausible, legal answer was given – and explained, that is not stonewalling. Secondly, if a questioner is not willing to accept the answer because it is something the questioner does not want to accept, just who is doing the stonewalling? Recommendation: a serious sit down where both sides are open and willing to work together is needed. Both sides.

Point 4:

After listening to those in the two meetings we talked to who had “concerns” one sure can surmise that there is a lot of “the grass is greener on the other side” going on. Well, is it? Has anyone examined the other side thoroughly yet? If so, who were they talking to?!?

But that is getting ahead of the purpose of this study. If people are jumping ahead, that could be construed as not doing the proper considering and concentrating on this study’s objective – and not doing this study justice as a result. So please take the above paragraph in perspective of that.

Point 5:

It seems obvious that some committee members are very upset because the RDCO is not “open”. Okay, lets look at that. Would the committee members be open to the RDCO explaining how disgruntled people of any stripe were treated and why? Are there any revenge factors going on which the RDCO, in their perceived way of not hurting people, have judiciously kept under wraps? Is the RDCO perhaps just keeping under wraps how they are being extra judicious to protect people who are just activists who are unwilling to listen?!? Just how open do we want the RDCO to be? As consultant Alan noted: “be careful what you wish for”!!

Point 6:

We would recommend that “the other sides” be listened to as well. “Sides”. RDCO should have input to a lot of statements which could be taken as accusations of some sort. RDCO and RDNO should have talks through their respective CAO’s. Why? The two of us in this submission want the problems solved, and if the current study has or had the full support of the current committee, this would be very desirable! The very last thing which should be supported is a transfer of a problem or problems. What do we mean by that?!?

Just what makes anyone think that anyone (like NORD) would want a bunch of unresolved problems of any type transferred to them?

Point 7:

Speaking of NORD – has anyone in NORD looked carefully into the associated costs, communicated them to the North Westside committee (and the public out here) and considered how much extra they could be to us out here? Again, it should be noted this is beyond the scope of the study. For us. For the Committee.

Minor Point:

The first two meeting's attendees were made up of either little other than the consultant and company along with NW committee members and a few public members (including us) in the first meeting, and the same with a very little more members of the public in the second meeting! We trust that this is not representative of actual interest in this subject, and hope there is better feedback via the web or in mail-ins. There was also an obvious lack of knowledge "of the area" from some attendees because, one could assume, the people we talked to had not heard about the area and some pertinent goings on leading up to this study. The reason we bring this up is there might be a possibility of one-sided views which (as noted above) are based on only talking to those who give compatible views without considering all the facts and information.

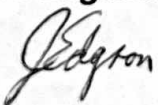
Bottom Line:

We would strongly recommend the current committee focus on this study and its purpose, and that the RDCO take input to the concerns (even if of the "grass is greener" variety). If there are legitimate concerns which must be addressed, the RDCO should be encouraged to do so and be supported in doing so. In the process of gathering information, the committee would be wise to (as Alan the consultant noted) "be careful what you wish for"!! And as us two noted, it is recommended that full communication occur between the RDCO and the RDNO as to the history leading up to this event prior to the conclusion of this study. Just in case.

Unless, of course, the RDCO just wants to get rid of "the problem" and transfer it to the RDNO! But that is probably not a consideration at this point.

All the best to the Committee at this point. We will attend and listen to the June 22, 2022 meeting as well as the July meeting. Then we will ponder all that has gone on and submit our (very hopefully!!) further positive input.

Jim Edgson



Anne Edgson

