

## MEDIA RELEASE



# West End Neighbours urges Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson to clarify “Mayor’s West End Community Advisory Committee”

(Vancouver, July 20, 2010) West End Neighbours yesterday sent a letter to Mayor Gregor Robertson urging him to improve the design of the controversial “Mayor’s West End Community Advisory Committee.” On July 8, 2010, the Vision Vancouver Councillors voted as a bloc to create the Committee, after strong opposition from non-Vision Councillors and from citizens who had spent eight hours at City Hall for their chance to get their concerns across.

[A copy of the letter to the Mayor is attached \(also download from our website—see “Media releases” under “News Updates” tab\).](#)

The City said it expected to announce “by mid- week” an online application for people who wish to join this Committee. “Before the call for applications is rushed out, we wanted to restate our serious concerns about this Mayor’s West End Community Advisory Committee and show how it should be structured to ensure it really works in the public interest,” said WEN spokesperson Randy Helten. The letter contains a reference table comparing the vague wording of the Committee’s terms of reference with what is expected to ensure good governance.

Below are other recent news and developments since the Vision Vancouver Mayor used profanity on July 8 when commenting on citizens who had spoken to council about the proposed Committee and he and Councillors Tim Stevenson and Heather Deal mocked those citizens on an audio recording accidentally left on the City’s official website Council video:

- On July 16, the Mayor made an apology by telephone to WEN spokesman Randy Helten.
- The West End “No Rezoning Without a Comprehensive Plan” Petition has now grown to 8,000 signatures.  
Online version: <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/westendvision/>
- Nearly 48,000 people have viewed the YouTube video showing the Mayor’s dialogue with two Councillors Stevenson and Deal, as of the time of this release: <http://www.youtube.com/user/WestEndNeighbours>
- West End Neighbours continues to monitor all major rezoning applications in the West End and calls upon City Hall to support work on a comprehensive plan based upon the principles of good urban planning, rather than spot rezonings. For example:
  - 1215 Bidwell (Maxine’s, at Bidwell and Davie): This, the first rezoning site under the City’s controversial Short Term Incentives for Rental Housing (STIR) program, was approved for rezoning to build a 21-storey condominium and rental tower on December 15. Businesses currently leasing space there from owner Millennium Developments are required to vacate by July 31. An appeal with the BC Ombudsperson regarding this rezoning is still being reviewed. Citizens are still campaigning actively to save the building for its heritage value.
  - 1401 Comox (St John’s Church, at Comox and Broughton): On July 15, selected residents began receiving yellow cards in the mail announcing a third Open House on a 22-storey tower proposed under the STIR program, to be held on July 29. By the evening of July 15, the City’s website announced that the Open House had been cancelled by applicant. Inquiries to staff found that the developers had cancelled it to do further work on the submission. Citizens are continuing their efforts to save this site, sold by the United Church of Canada last April to Westbank Projects Corp. and Peterson Investment Group.
  - Beach Towers (Cardero and Harwood): Following the planning department’s rejection of an initial proposal to build a fifth tower, the owner (Devonshire Properties) has submitted preliminary plans for high-density infill surrounding the four towers, including a wall of 57 stacked townhouses on Beach Avenue, an eight-story, 94-unit building on Cardero and Harwood, and 13 townhouses surrounding the North tower. This infill will destroy the open space and terraces that characterize this award-winning, mid-century site, and contradicts the planning department’s official position to preserve the heritage of this site by including it on the post-1940 heritage register.
  - 1754 Pendrell: A proposal by DTKH Pendrell Developments Ltd. for a 21-storey luxury condo and rentals was before an Open House on May 12. The Urban Design Panel voted unanimously on May 5 not to support the design due to height, bulk, and lack of a match with the streetscape. The developer is reportedly reconsidering the application.
  - Coast Plaza Hotel (Comox and Denman): Brook + Associates Inc. applied to the City to rezone this site to convert hotel rooms and facilities to residential (rental apartments), office and retail uses. 314 rental units would be created at virtually no cost to City coffers. An Open House was held on June 30.

*West End Neighbours (WEN) is a network of residents that has grown to thousands of West End renters and owners, concerned about the impact of fast-tracked rezoning on liveability in the West End and the implications for all of Vancouver.*

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