

SIMPSON: More townhomes, more frustration, more rambling from Surrey's 'leaders'

Could it be? Could city council actually make decisions based on what residents want? Did we have them all wrong after all? Sadly, no.

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Cindy Dalglish and Councillor Tom Gill.

Well that "victory" was short lived.

But you can't fault frustrated opponents of a Sullivan-area housing development, who fought tooth and nail to slow development in their area that's already jam packed, thanks to city council's grow-at-all-costs strategy.



And, judging by Cindy Dalglish's comments to the *Now*, you can't count them out, either.

The whole mess started in May.

Neighbours, with Dalglish leading the way, fought a controversial application in their area, fearing even more

congested schools and roads will result if the planned 181 townhouses and 106 rental apartment units were built by Redekop Homes on a vacant lot.

In a victory of sorts for the residents, on June 27, council put the brakes on the application, sending it back to staff.

Dalglish and her fellow advocates felt as if they had accomplished something most residents thought impossible – for a brief moment, they thought city council actually listened to them.

Could it be? Could council actually *hear* residents and make decisions based on what *they* want? Is council actually poised to put a neighbourhood's interests before a developer's? Did we have them all wrong after all?

It turns out, sadly, the answer is no. Alas, it was only a charade.

You see, after being “stonewalled” at city hall over the past month, Dalglish and company are feeling betrayed after council OK'd rezoning for the development site on Monday night.

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“So here we have the city going ahead with reckless abandon, pandering to the developers rather than to the people who live here and call this home,” Dalglish told the *Now's* Tom Zillich on Tuesday.

“I have emails where I'm asking questions and I'm not getting responses... I'm calling councillors to talk about this, they say they can't talk about it. That doesn't make sense to me, and is frustrating as well.”

Councillors who can't talk to residents about a project that will impact their everyday lives? Councillors who aren't answering emails? Not answering questions?

That can't be right, can it?



There must be a good explanation for all this.

Let's see what Councillor Tom Gill has to say about why council would add even more congestion into the area's already jam-packed roads and schools. After all, he was the one who moved the motion to approve rezoning on Monday.

So, who's to blame, Tom?

“(The province) hasn't built the school they're supposed to build. I am hoping something will materialize, because it must.”

So, let me get this straight.

We're just going to keep approving developments and keep our fingers crossed that a magical school will one day "materialize?"

Seems legit.

Well what about council, Tom? Doesn't it have a role to play here? It can't be blameless in this whole mess, can it? It wouldn't blatantly ignore residents, would it?

"(The city) has been very thoughtful and very respectful in terms of doing our job," he told the *Now*. "My job is to make sure it's the appropriate land use over the next 50 to 100 years."

Interesting. I thought your job was to listen to your electorate.

My mistake.

The good news for Surrey is we have stalwart residents like Cindy Dalglish, who aren't easily dismayed and won't back down from a fight that, at times, seems impossible to win.

"We're not going to just sit down and say, 'Oh well, this is done,' she said. "We're not doing that."

If only Surrey had a few thousand more Cindy Dalglish's...

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