

Jonathan Baker's talking notes for Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver, "Future of Vancouver" event, Hollywood Theatre, December 4, 2012

Mayor Phillips and Walter Hardwick made significant contributions.

- Until TEAM the City had no heritage preservation policy. Under TEAM one was introduced.

TEAM ERA today is seen as Vancouver's Camelot.

Between 1966 to 1972 Tom Campbell was Mayor. During his term, the City held a referendum which authorized the Pacific Centre. He advocated a freeway that would cut through a large part of the downtown east side. The construction of the Bayshore Inn at the entrance of and the apartment at the north foot of Burrard. Also under his watch Two Bentall Centre, the Centennial Museum, the Bloedel Conservatory, HR Macmillan Planetarium and Pacific Centre were built under his watch. He oversaw the initial acquisition of some of the South Side of False Creek.

For a number of reasons the NPA fell out of favour, not the least of which was Development related.

TEAM consisted of an extremely capable group of Academics, professionals and community activists. In the first election, in 1968 Art Phillips and Walter Hardwick were elected. In the next election May Brown, Marguerite Ford, Darlene Marzari and Mike Harcourt, physicist, Fritz Bowers, Traffic Engineer Setty Pendakur and Architect Geoff Massey. They truly were a team that had more collective intelligence and talent than any level of government in Canada since.

The TEAM council is remembered for a series of major initiatives that set the tone for the next forty years.

- Flexibility was introduced into the planning and design process;
- planning became neighborhood based
- cultural institutions flourished including the Vancouver East Cultural Centre the Cultch, the Academy of Music, the Contemporary Art Gallery, the Childrens Festival; heritage areas and policies; the Orpheum theater was created
- the bureaucracy was overhauled;
- The property endowment fund was set up.
- Although Granville Island was an initiative under the Federal Government, TEAM and in particular,

There are similarities between the mood today and then. I attended a zoning hearing at Prince of Wales School in about 1968 to consider the development of the CPR's lands at Arbutus and King Edward. Mayor Tom Campbell chaired the meeting. He bounded to the microphone, gazed over the 1200 people packing the School Auditorium and shouted, "Wow –it is a sell out."

In the rear of the room was pediatric surgeon Dr. David Hardwick. He shouted back, "Hey Tom. It was a sellout before the meeting."

I think people feel with each spot rezoning that takes place today represents a sellout.

TEAM took control in 1972 (elections were every two years) the old council was mostly turfed and a new TEAM Council was elected. The two NPA members who remained were excellent Councilors.

I was at Team Headquarters as the results came in. Someone went to the chalk board at the front of the room where they were keeping score and wrote one word. It wasn't TEAM or PHILLIPS or HARDWICK. It was "Fotheringham." Allan Fotheringham, the Sun Reporter, had relentlessly pummeled the NPA for months.

In those days the newspaper and editorial writers had far more influence. Today people get their news from the net, personalized from a variety of sources. Because of the tendency to select news and blogs that we agree with, I am not sure that the public gets two sides to an issue or that it is actually better informed.

There were two City Managers at that time called The Board of Administration. One was an Engineer named Lorne Ryan. The manager in charge of Planning, was the Imperious Gerald Sutton Brown. He ran a tight ship. He was also a brilliant planner and administrator in his own right.

The first thing Phillips and Team did was to get control of the bureaucracy. They fired the City Manager, Gerald Sutton Brown. Ray Spaxman, an architect, was hired from Toronto as Planner. They liked him partly because he was an advocate of neighborhood planning.

Prof. Fritz Bowers, later become the City manager. Dr. Bowers ran City Hall like a University dean. Power was decentralized. The morale of the staff greatly improved.

The Manager under Vision is said to be not just a micro manager, but a *nano* manager. Management styles follow trends like everything else. The Current management is even more centralized than in the late sixties.

As to Sutton Brown he told me that being fired was the best thing that ever happened to him. He was promptly hired by Mobile Oil and as head of its massive real estate branch. He planned new Cities all over the world.

When Mayor Phillips retired I wrote a poem for him called "You Never Can Tell" which dealt with the unpredictability of life and plans. It was read at the party. The opening three verses were:

REMEMBER THE DAY YOU DEPOSED SUTTON-  
BROWN?  
THE WORDS SPREAD LIKE MEASLES ALL OVER  
THE TOWN.,  
YOU WERE QUITE RUTHLESS TO MAKE HIM STEP  
DOWN  
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS  
TO THAT HELPLESS OLD TOOTHLESS?

BUT AS IT TURNED OUT HIS CAREER DIDN'T  
SPOIL  
HE WAS HIRED TO PLAN TOWNS FOR MOBILE OIL  
HE TRAVELS TO PLACES WHEREVER ITS SUNNY-  
THE WAY IT TURNED OUT, IT WAS FUNNY.

YOU NEVER CAN TELL, YOU NEVER CAN TELL  
WHAT WONDERFUL FORTUNES CAN SPRING  
FROM THE WELL  
OF NATURAL DISASTERS  
THAT TURN OUT QUITE SWELL  
TILL THE END, YOU NEVER CAN TELL

The symbol of the new TEAM Council was the information booth in the entrance to City Hall. Until then a visit to City Hall was a Kafkesque adventure. There was no way of knowing where you needed to go and once you got there what to do. There were no signs. Many offices had no receptionists. After that they opened up Council and Committee meetings so that people could attend outside of their normal working hours.

This is called transparency.

Transparency is a virtue. It is not the virtue the VISION Council is best at.

Local Area Planning actually began during Tom Campbell's administration with the social planning department under its Director, Maurice Egan, who was hired in 1968. At that point there were actually two planning departments. Social Planning and Planning.

The Social Planners worked with local area ratepayers and tenants associations as well with service teams of police and social workers to try to address issues if there was a problem.

The TEAM Council expanded this model under the new Director of Planning, Ray Spaxman.

TEAM produced Vancouver's first urban core bike network when it closed streets in the west end. It also introduced traffic barriers in Shaughnessy making streets both pedestrian and bike friendly. The plan and the process yielded exceptional results. Vancouver became one of the very few Cities with a livable high density core under a plan that was neighborhood based.

Similar Official Development Plans (ODPs) were created in Shaughnessy, the Downtown, DTE, False Creek, Coal Harbour.

I am old enough to remember in the fifties when the Russians claimed to have invented everything from the telephone to the automobile. VISION with its claims to be the first local government concerned about the environment reminds me of the waning days of the Soviet Union. In spite of all of their claims about democracy and involvement, however, there is a feeling that they have abandoned planning altogether.

TEAM ascended to power under a two party system. Both the NPA and TEAM favoured development but in different ways. If you voted for one or the other you had a reasonable expectation of what you were going to get. That is not what happened in 2008. When the NPA's Mayor Sullivan promoted his Ecodensity program (an unholy alliance between the development industry and theological environmentalism) he lost the support of his own constituency and lost the election. The new VISION Council proceeded to implement Sullivan's Econdensity program-with a vengeance. When these guys tell you that it is not about the money and that it is the principle – it's the money.

Today we have moved to a one party system, where both parties are funded by the one interest group that Council is supposed to regulate – the Developers. VISION got in on

one of the lowest voter turnouts ever. That should not be surprising:

When the choice is between TWEEDLEDOM and TWEEDLEDEE the turnout will be low.

### **Planning by appointed Committees**

There are two kinds of citizen committees that compete in Vancouver's Planning Process. The *Affordability Task Force* is an example of one that is being used with increasing frequency by VISION. The government appoints supporters to advise it, accepts their advice, and passes a bylaw. They consider this *consultation* or *citizen input*.

Committees of the second kind are those neighborhood groups that have no connection at all to City Hall but wish they had. Comprised of neighborhood residents they seek to provide their take on things that affect their local area. Sometimes they can be annoying. The Mayor revealed his annoyance a couple of years ago when he forgot to turn off his microphone.

### **Two Year Terms.**

When TEAM was elected terms of office were two years. For much of Vancouver's history council terms were only one year. This was changed by the Provincial government to two years more than half a century ago. In the early 1990s the *Vancouver Charter* was amended to provide for three year terms. There was no demand from the public to reduce their frequency of voting. It was a Christmas present the politicians gave to themselves.

Before TEAM apartments could not have balconies because the zoning penalized the developer who sought to add them. Under TEAM there were enormous improvements in design and siting. The City recognized that substandard buildings were the market's response to substandard incomes and policies were implemented to provide affordable housing of a reasonable size and quality.

### **VISIONS BIG INNOVATION IS TINY HOUSING:**

Laneway housing was first proposed in Vancouver by the NPA's Peter Ladner and supported by Suzanne Anton. It was implemented by the VISION Council. Under TEAM infill housing was allowed in certain heritage areas but siting of buildings was done very carefully to minimize the impacts on neighbours.

TEAM set up the system of discretionary zoning. Under this system which has been implemented under the Local Government Act it applies to all municipalities. Under that

Act Use and Density are not variable. But the City can control siting and design. There is a controversy as to how discretion should be administered. Community Amenity Contributions came in many years after TEAM left office. They create an incentive to depart from plans.

It has been said that history repeats itself but never exactly. It starts out as comedy and ends up as farce. The Current Council is simultaneously tragic and farcical.