

**November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

Dear Fort Langley Resident(s),

I am writing to you to outline why I can no longer advocate for the developments we have proposed in Fort Langley. Please allow me to explain.

As many know, but some do not, I recently completed the construction of Coulter Berry, and then proposed to build a boutique hotel at the corner of Glover Road and Mary Avenue, along with a 3<sup>rd</sup> mixed-use development on the west side of Glover Road. Both proposals are three storeys, represent an additional \$65M investment in Fort Langley at two important sites, renewed restaurant and retail options, and hundreds of new parking stalls. Most parking is located underground where it should be, and we have proposed many more parking stalls than required.

Growing up in Langley City, I have always loved Fort Langley. I never imagined I would have the opportunities I have had to help revitalize it. Over the past 10 years, we made great strides. We renovated the facades of the west side of Glover Road, renovated the Fort Mall and increased its parking, and completed Coulter Berry, all of which has had an amazing impact. Great new additions, such as Lelem, Trading Post and Blacksmith Bakery, have added to that success. Fort Langley's commercial area is now more vibrant and popular than any of us could have foreseen even just a few years ago. I remember when not too long ago stores were vacant for up to a year, and now something as amazing as Fortitude thrives here. We can all be proud of this turnaround.

I believe that as a community we must secure quality investment, work hard, and continually renew to ensure we maintain a vibrant village. A boutique hotel would have had a tremendously positive impact, helped support local business, and increased surrounding property values. I held community planning sessions, presentations, and months of focus groups to confirm a direction *before* proceeding. A boutique hotel was *the* most significant request we heard, by far, in addition to green gathering spaces, family play areas, extra parking and performance area. I have tried hard to be transparent, consultative, and available to anyone that wanted to discuss our ideas for addressing these derelict sites, and to learn from the Coulter Berry experience. Thank you to everyone that chose to participate.

However, Township of Langley bureaucrats have made it impossible for me to proceed further, inexplicably dumping a bureaucratic can of worms on the proposals. They continue to maintain that a municipal lane through the middle of the boutique hotel, courtyard plaza, family amenity, and performance area is required, even though it is only their preference based on obsolete planning principles, unnecessary, and will be a dead-end for decades. It is not needed for emergency access. In 2014, the Director of Planning told me that a lane would not be requested if I acquired and included all of the lots there, which I then did. Regardless, I have outlined multiple solutions to address their concerns, such as compaction which removes the need for garbage trucks at all, multiple loading zones and alternative access for the properties to the south. It has made no difference whatsoever.

After almost two years of public consultation and revisions to address concerns, it was devastating to recently learn of a closed Council meeting with staff presentation that was held on June 26, 2017, at which Mayor and Council voted to require a lane by confirming absurd conditions for a "lane alternative" that only a lane can satisfy. The Council vote was held privately without a chance for me or

affected members of the public to even be heard. Shortly afterward, I was told by Township staff that the boutique hotel would not be considered further without a lane, but at least now I finally know why. I have outlined in detail countless times why the boutique hotel is impossible next to a lane, without an area for weddings, public events, and guest and public use. It is impossible to market "lane views."

In addition, the current ongoing personal attacks, threats that include suggesting I deserve to be murdered, and never-ending misinformation campaigns have again become truly insane. Yet it is nothing new. I have been personally attacked for years now. Rather than debate the proposals, or try to understand what is really going on, or propose an alternative vision they have for Fort Langley, critics rarely mention the proposals at all anymore. Instead, they conduct whisper campaigns, alarm tenants, lie, distort facts, quote me out of context, and attempt to destroy my character. Only those that have been through it know how much harm this causes. And while I have managed to take it, there is no point in continuing to do so while we have a Mayor and Council that won't address a broken bureaucracy, and are deciding our community's future in closed meetings.

More importantly, a debate about Fort Langley's future and what I am offering to build should not be about me, only what I am proposing. Unfortunately, people that do these things and Township of Langley staff have together ultimately succeeded in preventing that debate. Learning of the secret Council vote, I now see little choice but to accept that.

I truly have no idea what Township of Langley staff stand for, other than creating bureaucratic roadblocks such as unnecessary lanes, requiring that I solve jaywalking, or suggesting I may have to move Mary Avenue, as just a few examples among many. I have no idea what a majority of our Township Council stand for anymore other than rubber-stamping staff reports, doing as little as possible, and getting re-elected. I have no idea what the people that relentlessly attack me stand for other than the politics of personal destruction, preventing rational discussion, and stopping the proposals for the sake of it.

I know what I stand for, and fought for: doing something amazing in Fort Langley while maintaining village character, creating something that matters, creating destinations for people, not cars, for creating a result greater than the sum of its parts. I have been transparent, and upfront with my ideas for Fort Langley. I outlined clearly what I believe could have been an amazing future for Fort Langley that other communities such as Langley City or Aldergrove can only dream of, and do. I wish that as a community we had been given the opportunity to consider and present the proposals rationally.

I have accepted that the proposals will not move forward. I do not know what more I can do, or offer. Please believe that I have done everything that I possibly could have, and done all that I can to make good on what I believe countless residents asked me to do over two years ago. Either way, Fort Langley has an amazing future ahead of it, even if I can no longer be a part of making that better future a reality. I wish everyone in Fort Langley all the best, and, of course, all are free to contact me anytime. All feedback is welcome, as it always has been.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Woodward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eric" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Woodward".

Eric Woodward

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