

"I would like to speak to you tonight about how two meetings have provided the framework of how I have spent the last three years....one meeting was on Sept. 5, 2007 and the other is fast approaching - March 24, 2010"...the first meeting motivated me to prepare for the second...

My first meeting of the CALWMC was January 24th 2007 where I began my sewage treatment journey. The meeting that framed the way I would do my job however was on September 5, 2007....it was the Committee of the Whole meeting where those of you who were in attendance voted to support the P3 for the Patient tower at the Royal Jubilee. This meeting changed the way I viewed being a campaign coordinator, a citizen and a voter.

As I arrived at this meeting I assumed the room would be filled with citizens, local media and stakeholders – it is a hospital, healthcare - to my surprise I got there and found one media representative, 4 members of public, and a whole bunch of staff and consultants. To my bigger surprise I saw all the directors but one vote for the P3 but even more confusing was the dialogue around the table. I heard things like

- I will support the motion because the care centre is necessary for the community and I am ambivalent about P3's
- "this is not the place to discuss P3's – this information is way over our heads
- This decision needs to be made at the provincial level.
- Larry Blaine and his outfit are offering us a hospital for \$107 million as a take it or leave it offer and we can not refuse this
- This debate is one of pragmatism and idealism
- I will reluctantly support the motion because we need the 500 beds

This meeting, the dialogue, the decision and the participation moved to frame my work over the next three years. That there were no members of the public there to witness these comments and no media there to report them...a major infrastructure project being handed to private corporations and no one was there. This is when I knew I had my work cut out for me – hell if they didn't show up for a hospital what are the chances that they would show up for sewage treatment?

So with over 50 CALWMC meetings and detailed notes combined with a mountain of reading on procurement under my belt I have taken the discussion to the citizens of the CRD. I have taken every possible

opportunity to work with amazing activists, volunteers, stake holder groups, organizations, been to more that 75 public markets, community fairs, open houses, neighbourhood forums and community events from Saanich to the Luxton Fair..

I have talked to anyone that would have me – including you. On Sept. 5, 2007 I committed to do what I could to ensure that residents of the CRD have the information to make an informed decision about privatization so that they understood the dialogue and debate and that they, the residents, could then empower you to make informed decisions.

There have been hurdles and explaining P3's was one... sewage ain't sexy which has made engagement difficult. Many people don't even know what the CRD is - let alone what procurement means but I can tell you without a shadow of a doubt that once they understand what privatization means in their community, the citizens of the CRD overwhelmingly want this system to be public. Of course I did run into a few people who believed in P3s – we agreed to disagree.

I also spent a lot of time (along with others) trying to raise this issue during the municipal elections and I know that at 4 separate All candidate meetings you were asked to stand if you supported public water and wastewater systems. I was proud to see so many of you stand. With our vote we entrusted you with our values and you now hold the responsibility to represent them– to represent us!

As I said the last three years have been framed by two meetings one in 2007 and one coming up in two weeks – there are significant changes between then and now...

On Sept. 5, 2007 you said that you received the information too late and didn't have enough time to sort through it...

- This time you will have had the information for almost a month
- This time you will have had access to all sorts of evidence and information from around the world
- This time you have rooms full of engaged citizens and media
- This time you will be crystal clear about your residents want
- This time your decision will not only be witnessed but it will be communicated.
- This time you are accountable to your constituents
- This time you have the opportunity to represent us with confidence

In my efforts to engage our community I have handed out your contact information to more people than I can count. Sadly what I have heard over and over is that "it doesn't matter what we tell them because they will do what they want anyway".

Or "the province gets what the province wants..."

This is your opportunity to show people that they are wrong – that their voices and their actions do matter.

Alice Walker said that "the most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any"...you have an opportunity to reconnect citizens to their power, let them know you heard them.

Thank you,
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