

Opinions posed by Andrew Robertson, 1085 Thomson Road, Anmore at the Town Hall meeting on 2009-10-08 concerning the Child Day Care Centre.

The first set of issues below were stated as opening remarks.

- 1) The historical position given by Karen Cobb that at the last elections a Referendum on borrowing money for the joint Child Day Care / Community Centre was defeated by the village by a margin of 2:1, was re-iterated to the audience as a reminder where the village sentiment stood.
- 2) The proposal that village land should be made available to the proposed Child Care Centre at no cost was challenged by Robertson as being, in essence, the raising of funds against the wishes of the village's referendum. The logic given was that such land could be sold to fund renewals of needy infrastructure, (Village Hall and roads), whereas giving it to the Child Care Centre and then borrowing money to fund other needy infrastructures was simply a 'creative accounting' method of circumventing the Referendum by 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'.
- 3) It was suggested that from a purely cost-benefit viewpoint, requirements for funding should be prioritized and that in order to give the village the most benefit from the sale of available lands, those funds should perhaps be used to build a new village hall or to repair dilapidated side roads or review other needy infrastructure before considerations were given to a Child Day Care Centre.
- 4) The world is in a recession and we in BC are not immune. It was thought that the Government recently cut \$13M from the education budget, (this point was conceded as open to correction), hence it was considered that we might be seen as poor BC citizens if we insist on spending \$0.5M grant money on something that we didn't really need, just because it was available. It was suggested it might be returned to Government with the Proviso that we be short-listed in future when funds are once again more readily available.
- 5) Additionally and in consideration of 1) and 3) above, it was considered that the amount of money being proposed on this Child Care facility would benefit a very small minority of the village. Indeed, the council were asked if such a child care facility would actually accommodate ALL the children currently eligible to attend such a centre as it was understood that it would not. Hence it was further believed that this project was a poor use of village resources.
- 6) Given point 1) above, it was suggested by Robertson that the Council were morally bound to consider another Referendum to clarify if the Village really wanted a Child Care Centre or would if they rather see the Council's efforts spent elsewhere.

Later in the meeting further comments were voiced by Robertson and these are paraphrased, from memory, as indicated below.

On the suggestion from several in the Audience that based on an attendance at the Town Hall meeting, (of approx 50 persons), that the 'majority of the village were in favour of a Child Day Care Centre', Robertson countered that this was incorrect. He believed that 50

lobbyists at a town hall meeting do not constitute the feelings of the village ballot box, where 2:1 of the voting population indicated disfavour with borrowing against such a project. Robertson once again re-iterated that given the contentiousness of this issue, a Referendum should be undertaken to clarify the point once and all for both the council and the population. Unfortunately Robertson later used the word 'Duty Bound' and this was pounced upon by protagonists of the project, with Ms Cobb being asked to clarify that the Council were not 'Duty Bound' at all.

In later requests for positive suggestions on a way forward, Robertson asked if the Council had considered selling as much of the available 'Village' land for development as possible and building a joint Village Hall/Community Centre/Child Day Care Centre from the proceeds and if necessary, using the Government grant to assist in funding this project, (perhaps deemed as socially responsible, given point 4) above).

On at least two occasions Robertson clearly stated that he was not against a Child Day Care Centre per se. The gist of his position was, and always will be 'fiscal responsibility', 'maximising the value for money for the residents of Anmore', combined with a desire that the Council consider the real wishes of the community and not just those of a lobbying minority.