

Test of letter to Editor – June 28,2016

Once again we see North Bay council's usual response to any type of criticism.... shoot the messenger.

Last evening Councillor King suggested that Invest North Bay should be subject to the same rules as every municipally owned corporation and produce a budget to support expenditures.

True to form there was a rush to apologize to Invest North Bay directors for King's remarks. Council members seemed oblivious to the fact that his criticism was directed at them not members of Invest North Bay.

The fact of the matter is that North Bay has been budgeting hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Economic Development Department over the past 20 years. In 2016, taxpayers will continue to contribute \$775,000 for this department. Almost 70% of that amount is salaries and benefits. If there have been any benefits to taxpayers for these expenditures, they have been minimal. This is evidenced by the decision in late 2014 to form a separate company, Invest North Bay, to try and produce some actual results.

The purpose of this separate company was to be operated by local volunteer businessmen and somehow produce results that City employees could not achieve.

The remarks that the chairman of the corporation, Mr Goulet, made upon his resignation earlier this year, tell the story of the lack of success they have had to date.

"I sincerely hope that the work that we all did in the start-up phase of Invest North Bay pays large dividends for the city as the model matures in the months and years ahead."

It was later announced that Mr. Goulet was contracted to try to pursue a business lead with the agency.

So what taxpayers are left with is an economic development department who does not seem to be subject to any cost/benefit analysis plus a separate corporation that council members are willing to provide funds to without out any real plan as to how those funds will be spent or what its measurable objectives are.

This treatment of King is clearly a blatant attempt to divert attention away from the fact that city staff and council members have no idea how to stop the flow of job losses and attract new businesses to this area.

Instead of rushing to apologize to people who have not been subject to any criticism, Council should immediately adjust city spending to reflect the reality of low investment and job growth for the foreseeable future.