

5. Social Housing Reclamation Initiatives

As mayor, how much, if any, police power are you willing to support, and be responsible for, in the barricading and guarding of empty public buildings against occupation by the homeless this winter?

Yesterday on television three of you made comments that worry us. You appear to oppose what we consider to be innovative social housing initiatives proposed by community groups and homeless people in the downtown eastside. You must clarify what you mean by the provocative comments made yesterday. We would like you to make sure that we are incorrect to interpret these statements as support for further escalation of police violence in the pursuit of evicting squatters in what will be previously abandoned buildings this winter. Your comments were as follows. Larry Campbell said: "You just cannot take over a building." Jennifer Clarke said: "It simply does not solve any problems." Valerie MacLean said: "Taking control of derelict buildings is illegal." (If you cannot believe that our candidates actually made these statements view the Sunday CTV coverage at <<http://www.bcctv.ca>>. The segment in which the statements are made begins at 04:07.)

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Friends of the Woodward's Squat

FWS told the current Mayor and City Council in person on 22 October that if they did not come up with an emergency action plan to resolve the immediate housing crisis in the downtown eastside by the end of the business day on 25 October then our organization would support the nation-wide "Give It or Guard It" campaign. The City failed to act. FWS now endorses this campaign as organized locally by the Anti-Poverty Committee. We shall now proceed to assist APC and Vancouver's homeless to open up their own housing units.

Friends of the Woodward's Squat | www.woodsquat.net | friends@woodsquat.net

Please note that FWS is a material support group. It does not represent the Woodward's Squat or Woodward's Coalition for Social Housing and does not speak for any other of the many groups and individuals currently involved in the DTES housing action. For a list of groups and contact information visit our web site.

W.O.O.D.S.Q.U.A.T. #31

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR OUR MAYORAL CANDIDATES



COMPENSATION FOR DESTROYED PROPERTY
SOCIAL HOUSING RECLAMATION INITIATIVES
ANTI-VACANCY BYLAW & RENT CONTROL
DISCIPLINARY MEASURES FOR VPD
PREVENTATIVE MEASURES FOR VPD

ALL-CANDIDATES FORUM SFU HARBOUR CENTRE

(7:00-9:00 PM – HASTINGS AT SEYMOUR)

DAY 45 OF THE WOODWARDS SQUAT

MONDAY – 28 OCT 02

1. Compensation for Destroyed Property

As mayor, what will you do to ensure fair compensation for the possessions of the homeless destroyed by the City in conjunction with the VPD on 22 September?

On Sunday 22 September of this year the City Engineering Department worked with the Vancouver Police Department to destroy the possessions of our city's homeless citizens camped in front of Woodward's—blankets, pants, shirts, shoes, socks, mattresses, medications, IDs, personal diaries and address books, tools, sleeping bags, furniture and food—the list goes on. This was a bizarre and cruel action on the part of both the City and VPD. The City must disclose all information regarding the Engineering Department's involvement in this matter which included the use of City workers to load possessions into City garbage trucks for on-site crushing and destruction as well as City water-flushing trucks to remove any trace of this action immediately afterwards. We have recently obtained video recordings of the garbage trucks crushing the property and the street-flushers "cleansing" the sidewalk afterward. We have brought copies of our preliminary inventory (Dated 14 October) for you to review, if you can stomach it.

2. Disciplinary Measures for VPD

As mayor, what disciplinary measures will you bring, through your role in the Vancouver Police Board, against Chief Constable Jamie Graham for his authorization of unreasonable and unlawful use of police powers?

During the evictions of 21 and 22 September, the arrests at the Britannia Daycare and Canadian Tire on 03 October, and the arrests and detainments on 04, 05 & 23 October, unreasonable and unlawful police power was deployed. An evidence package (including video recordings, photographs and witness testimony) documenting these incidents is near completion and will be made available in early November. There will be no doubt left in anyone's mind of the severity of these events that took place in our city.

3. Preventative Measures for VPD

As mayor, what will you do to prevent the VPD from engaging in any further unlawful harassment, detainment or arrest of the residents at Woodward's squat or any other homeless citizens in the downtown eastside who reside in many of our already dangerous parks and back alleys?

The residents of the Woodward's squat continue to face ongoing daily and nightly harassment by the Vancouver Police Department especially as it pertains to: (a) the issuing of verbal threats; and (b) the misuse of police vehicles. On the afternoon of 20 October, for instance, eleven motorcycle officers stopped on Abbott Street and yelled threats about "moving day." At night time officers in vehicles turn their sirens on when they travel on Abbott Street between Hastings and Cordova then turn them off once they are past the Woodward's squat. This is an unacceptable form of harassment as well as a dangerous misuse of police vehicles.

4. Anti-Vacancy Bylaw & Rent Control

As mayor, what will you do to ensure the City adopts an anti-vacancy by-law and rent controls?

The City must acknowledge and act upon in a timely fashion the demands of the Woodward's Social Housing Coalition and the other community groups involved in the Woodward's Squat insofar as these demands are within the City's area of functional responsibility. These demands are reprinted in our Friday issue of the *W.O.O.D.S.Q.U.A.T.* newsletter, available to you at this meeting today. We are especially concerned about two demands that you, as mayor, will be able to act upon. First: the demand to develop a civic anti-vacancy by-law to seize and convert privately-owned abandoned buildings and property into social housing. Second: the demand to develop rent controls to ensure that no one pays over thirty percent of their income to housing. We believe these are reasonable and obvious demands and should be adopted as part of any solution to the City's immediate housing crisis.