

## Revelations at the August 14 ALC meeting

At their August 14 meeting with the Commission, the applicants to exclude the Garden City Lands made slick presentations. Most of the general public who attended were opposed to the application; however, as the Commission's guests, they kept respectfully quiet, suppressing their dissent. Since I was able to obtain a faint recording, I have taken it upon myself to respond to you, the commissioners, on behalf of those many citizens who made time to attend on that summer morning because they care so much.

I have naturally focused on what was new—or received new emphasis—on August 14, beginning by relating it to what was previously known from the application documents.

### Usage in this submission

**CLC:** Canada Lands Company Limited and/or Canada Lands Company CLC Limited

**Council:** Richmond City Council

**the applicants:** CLC (the project manager), the City (the applicant of record), and the Band (all essentially co-applicants)

**the Band:** the Musqueam Indian Band

**the City:** the City of Richmond

**the Coalition:** the Garden City Lands Coalition Society and/or its members and supporters

**the Commission:** the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC)

**the Lands:** the Garden City Lands

**the public hearing** = Richmond Council's public hearing about the application to exclude the Garden City Lands from the Agricultural Land Reserve, March 2008

**the trade centre** = the trade and exhibition centre (proposed for the Lands) that Tourism Richmond was unable to finance before the City-set deadline and that was not one of the three Richmond uses unanimously approved by Richmond Council but that reappeared in the application as a likely use of the Lands

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b> The Lands development population <i>would be</i> part of the projected City Centre population (e.g., in Appendix 4A, pp. 9–12).</p>	<p><b>Revelation 1 on Aug. 14:</b> The Lands development population <i>would not be</i> part of the projected City Centre population. (That is consistent with the new CCAP).</p>
<p><b>What came out:</b> The applicants’ main spokesperson, Mayor Malcolm Brodie, said that “The alternative to the application is unacceptable sprawl. And that would put pressure on the ALR land in Richmond. . . .” Since I knew the background, which I will explain next, that told me a lot.</p>	
<p><b>Important background:</b> The City Centre Area Plan (CCAP) approved by Richmond Council on July 21, 2008, conveys crucial clear facts about the Lands (Staff report, June 11, 2008, p. 11):</p> <p>(a) The build-out population of 120,000 does <i>not</i> depend on any Garden City Lands population.</p> <p>b) The Lands are <i>not</i> required for park and open space, except “beyond 2031”.</p> <p>By voting for the plan, all the Council members implicitly agreed that the appropriate future City Centre population is 120,000—even if the Lands would not house any of those thousands.</p> <p>Note 1: Actually, some parts of the application <i>may</i> support what the mayor said on August 14, while most parts don’t. The application combines so much repetition with so much inconsistency that sometimes I can only determine what the application <i>most commonly seems</i> to be saying.</p> <p>Note 2: The Aug. 14 revelation is what informed people have assumed. The many high rises planned for the City Centre will go ahead regardless of what happens on the Garden City Lands, so common sense says that any population on the Lands will be <i>on top of</i> the projected number (120,000).</p>	
<p><b>Key point:</b> A central aspect of the City’s community need argument has been expressed in contradictory ways, with a new “need” replacing a “need” that was disproven by the new CCAP.</p>	
<p><b>Logical inference:</b> Since the mayor’s altered community “need” reflects the truth under the new CCAP (that the Lands population would be <i>additional</i>), one might infer that switching the Richmond “community need” (from the outdated one, App. 4A, pp. 9–12) is a deliberate City tactic.</p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The City’s “community need” related to the thousands of people who would live on the Lands has been whatever sounded good at the time (one thing earlier, another later).</p> <p>Since the intended effects are confused and unstable, imagine the <i>unintended</i> effects!</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> At least in this application, the City is not credible.</p>	

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b> The Garden City Lands development would be Smart Growth. (Truth: It would definitely not be.)</p>	<p><b>Revelation 2 on Aug. 14:</b> The applicants have gone a step further, now calling the alternatives “unacceptable sprawl.”</p>
<p><b>Important background:</b> In the applicants’ Garden City Lands Open House survey forms, which are included in the application materials, the proposed Garden City Lands development is called “<i>Smart Growth</i>.” Worse, that is what respondents were told at a critical point, seemingly to mislead them into saying they supported the development. From a Smart Growth standpoint, the development would be <i>urban sprawl</i>, since (at best) it replaces feasible infill in the original City Centre with construction on farmland that has been annexed to the City Centre. (Survey respondents fought back, many of them turning the tables on the manipulation, but that’s another matter.)</p>	
<p><b>Details of revelation:</b> Instead of retracting the false claim of Smart Growth, as explicitly requested by Executive Director Cheeying Ho of Smart Growth B.C., applicant spokesperson Malcolm Brodie has gone further, claiming that the alternative to developing the Lands is “unacceptable sprawl.” (URL for Cheeying Ho letter: <a href="http://www.gardencitylands.ca/PDF/Cheeying-Ho_Smart-Growth.pdf">http://www.gardencitylands.ca/PDF/Cheeying-Ho_Smart-Growth.pdf</a>)</p>	
<p><b>Logical inference:</b> The applicant fails/refuses to understand the difference between genuine Smart Growth and urban sprawl and/or is misleading the Commission.</p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The application is not credible about Smart Growth and urban sprawl.</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> The applicants are not credible.</p>	

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b> The application states the open space on the “City lands” as <b>68 or 65 acres</b>, about half the property, which occupies about 136 acres. (Truth: Unless the agreements are renegotiated, <i>nothing like</i> that much open space is possible.)</p>	<p><b>Revelation 3 on Aug. 14:</b> Without using figures, Mayor Brodie showed that he knows how much open space the City could get: either 35% of the Lands if the trade centre (15%) is built or 42.5% (CLC-Musqueam getting half the trade centre land if it is not built).</p>
<p><b>Important background:</b> ALR-exclusion opponents have repeatedly told Richmond Council that the City could only hope for less than 48 acres if a trade centre is built (35% of 136 acres = 47.8 acres) or less than 58 acres if one is not built (42.5% of 136 acres = 57.8 acres). The City keeps coming back with false figures. (Sometimes, they also bring in insignificant details, e.g., a bit of dedicated parkland in the development that would be more than offset by City land for shared roadways.)</p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The maximum parkland on the Lands is clearly 47.6 or 57.8 acres, not 65–68.</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> The application is not credible.</p>	

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b> Pages 2–7 of Appendix 4A supposedly show that no potential parkland in Richmond is an alternative to the Garden City Lands.</p>	<p><b>Revelation 4 on Aug. 14:</b> Malcolm Brodie said there are “no other sites available for the <i>scale</i> and <i>type</i> of open space.” That at least clarified the supposed problem.</p>
<p><b>How ALC staff disproved the application:</b> “Areas to the north and south of the proposed exclusion are under redevelopment for residential and commercial use and these areas could provide for the public amenities sought” (Staff Report re the initial application from Gordon Bednard, April 11, 2006, p. 5). <i>Exactly!</i> For instance, there were areas in the Alexandra area of West Cambie, just across Alderbridge Way on the north side of the Lands, that could have provided vastly more open space than the City elected to set aside in the newly adopted plan for that area. When I walked and drove around it, I had a sense of open area consisting of non-ALR farmland zoned single-family residential, with huge lots and few dwellings, mostly old or abandoned. That area looks on maps like a bite out of the City Centre. It could have served the City Centre and, like the Lands, been annexed into it.</p>	
<p><b>How the agreements disprove the application:</b> If the City eventually obtains open space on the Lands, it will be <i>scattered</i> throughout the Lands. The initial agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), states the terms: “The Public Lands will be scattered throughout the entire Garden City Property” (MOU Section 1.10). The follow-up Agreement of Purchase and Sale reiterates:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The parties hereto acknowledge and agree that as expressly stated in Section 1(10) of the MOU, and unless otherwise agreed in connection with the approval of any Comprehensive Development Plan, the Public Lands will be scattered throughout the entirety of the Lands. (Section 4.5)</p> <p>For the CLC-Band purpose, which consists of green space for the development lands, the scattering would be desirable. It also fits the image that the applicants have created for the public by often showing expanses of green space near the buildings in their promotional material. The City has suggested that it could change that by insisting (in rezoning-subdivision-OCP stages) that the City land not be scattered after all. However, besides sounding a lot like bad faith, that tactic isn’t practicable. After all, the City doesn’t get any land at all unless the CLC-Band parties approve the rezoning and subdivision. That puts the City in no position to pressure the other parties to agree to an arrangement that is opposite to what they negotiated. Also, since the “scattered throughout the entire property” provision has been high profile in the Garden City Lands debate, the parties would have agreed in writing to a change by now if they intended to forfeit their strong provision.</p> <p>Note: Self-evidently, since the Garden City Lands <i>are</i> open space, they are a good <i>type</i> of property for open space, but the <i>scale</i> of the parcels that the City might obtain is, <i>at best</i>, unknown.</p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The City could have obtained large-scale open space adjacent to the Lands. In contrast, any open space the City might obtain on the Lands is scheduled to be “scattered.”</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> The City is not credible.</p>	

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b></p> <p>(a) The City Centre Parkland Standard replaces the City-Wide Standard. (b) The Lands would help the rest of the City Centre to meet the City Centre Parkland Standard. (Truth: Not so!)</p>	<p><b>Revelation 5 on Aug. 14:</b></p> <p>Despite citizens providing clear and thorough corrections at the public hearings, the Lands would still supposedly supply 32% of the post-2031 City Centre Standard parkland needs.</p>
<p><b>Explanation re Untruth a:</b> The City-Wide Parkland Standard, which is 7.66 acres per thousand Richmond residents, is the basic open-space standard throughout Richmond. The City Centre Standard is a <i>supplementary</i> standard, a safeguard to ensure that parkland keeps getting set aside within the City Centre for the people who live within the City Centre—even though it costs far more to purchase parkland in the City Centre than in outlying areas of Richmond. The application is dead wrong in saying that the <i>supplementary</i> City Centre Standard (3.25 acres within the City Centre per thousand residents within the City Centre) <i>replaces</i> the basic City-Wide Standard.</p> <p><b>Explanation re Untruth b:</b> Even for the supplementary standard, the <i>City Centre</i> Parkland Standard, the Lands would only supply enough parkland for the Lands’ residents. It wouldn’t offset the anticipated (post 2031) parkland shortfall in the rest of the City Centre. For a full explanation, please see <a href="http://gardencitylands.wordpress.com/2008/04/24/the-14650-coincidence/">http://gardencitylands.wordpress.com/2008/04/24/the-14650-coincidence/</a>. That Garden City Lands blog post, “The 14,650 Coincidence,” includes the best-available calculation of Garden City Lands development population. It uses the City’s estimate of total floor area in the development (6,294,000 square feet), a generous average unit size of 1200 square feet, and the average Richmond household size in the 2006 census data (2.8 residents).</p> <p><b>Comment re the Aug. 14 revelation:</b> It makes clear that the applicants are making the same misleading statements despite so much citizen effort to clarify the reality at the public hearings.</p>	
<p><b>How the Lands development would create a parkland shortfall:</b></p> <p>What I’ve shown so far is simply that the parkland (or open space) on the Garden City Lands would supply 0% (not 32%) of the currently anticipated post-2031 needs for additional City Centre parkland to meet the <i>supplementary</i> City Centre Standard. However, far more parkland would additionally be needed somewhere in Richmond to meet the <i>basic City-Wide Standard</i> for the additional Richmond population in the Garden City Lands development. The Lands themselves should be supplying the required 7.66 acres of parkland per thousand residents. That is all clearly explained in “Our Stanley Park,” a column published in the <i>Richmond Review</i> that is available at <a href="http://gardencitylands.wordpress.com/12-our-stanley-park/">http://gardencitylands.wordpress.com/12-our-stanley-park/</a>. The bottom line is that the additional development population would <i>cause a need</i> for 112 more acres of Richmond parkland, far more open space than the City can possibly receive on the Lands if they are removed from the ALR.</p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The Lands development would <i>cause</i> a parkland shortfall, not solve one.</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> The application is not credible.</p>	

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b></p> <p>The various statements of Band need omit mention of the massive transfers of land and property to the Band since the first application —transfers that could meet the need.</p>	<p><b>Revelation 6 on Aug. 14:</b></p> <p>Malcolm Brodie stressed the number of Band members living off the reserve in order to prove a housing need. (Though mentioned in the application, that doesn't stand out there.)</p>
<p><b>Important background about transfers:</b> A June 20, 2008, <i>Globe and Mail</i> article, "B.C. natives lock up band office in dispute over land claims windfall," by Robert Mattus, describes the transfers:</p> <p>The B.C. government wrote a cheque to the Musqueam First Nation for \$5-million in mid-March and another cheque for \$15.3-million in mid-April as part of a settlement resolving three outstanding court cases, a B.C. government official confirmed.</p> <p>The cash was part of a settlement that included transfer of 59 hectares currently used for the University of British Columbia golf course, seven hectares currently used for the River Rock casino development and an additional 22 hectares, some of which will be developed for housing.</p> <p>The federal government has also announced a transfer of \$17-million in recognition of 2010 Olympic activities on land that the Musqueam claim as their territory. Negotiations are continuing on an additional \$3-million for unspecified programs. The Musqueam band has also received \$800,000 recently for compensation for the impact of the Canada Line, a new rapid transit line that crosses their fishing grounds in the Fraser River.</p> <p>The protesters say band members have not seen any of the money and have no idea what happened to the funds.</p>	
<p><b>Important background about housing need:</b> Key figures about housing and income on pages 2 and 3 of Appendix 4B, Musqueam Community Need, are not supported by the 2006 Canada Census, <a href="http://www.census2006.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/aboriginal/Details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&amp;Geo1=BAND&amp;Code1=59630308&amp;Geo2=PR&amp;Code2=59&amp;Data=Count&amp;SearchText=Musqueam&amp;SearchType=Begins&amp;SearchPR=01&amp;B1=All&amp;GeoLevel=&amp;GeoCode=59630308">http://www.census2006.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/aboriginal/Details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&amp;Geo1=BAND&amp;Code1=59630308&amp;Geo2=PR&amp;Code2=59&amp;Data=Count&amp;SearchText=Musqueam&amp;SearchType=Begins&amp;SearchPR=01&amp;B1=All&amp;GeoLevel=&amp;GeoCode=59630308</a>. For example, Appendix 4B says there are 140 housing units (owned and rented), whereas the 2006 census says there are 200 aboriginal households. The census shows that <i>almost half</i> (95 out of 200, which is 47.5%) of the aboriginal homes were built in the 20-year period between 1986 and 2006. In contrast, <i>less than a third</i> (28,840 out of 89675, which is 32.2%) of B.C. homes were built in that period. In other words, the aboriginal dwellings in the Musqueam Band area include a high percentage of relatively new dwellings (no more than twenty years old at 2006 census time— a far higher proportion of new dwellings than there are in B.C. as a whole.</p> <p>Furthermore, one could use the 2006 census statistics to show that aboriginals in the Musqueam Band area are either better off or worse off than the B.C. average. For example, using the census statistics for people who worked full time in the previous year, we find that aboriginals in the Musqueam Band area typically earned more (\$42,561 in 2005) than the B.C. average (\$39,237).</p> <p>Re (a) many Band members living off the reserve or (b) 60% of Band-area private dwellings <i>not</i> being occupied by Band members, it would be unwise to form conclusions from such minimal data.</p> <p><i>In any case, surely it makes sense to fund housing with dollars, not with prime ALR farmland.</i></p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The more one delves into the statements of Musqueam Community Need, the less convincing they are as reasons for removing the Garden City Lands from the ALR.</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> The application is not credible.</p>	

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b></p> <p>The application assumes City rezoning power without acknowledging that CLC, along with its Band partner, <i>also</i> has rezoning approval— with considerable power to get its way.</p>	<p><b>Revelation 7 on Aug. 14:</b></p> <p>Malcolm Brodie talked of “<i>full</i> regulatory control over zoning . . . to the City,” emphasizing <i>full</i> control, even though citizens have repeatedly showed Council how its control is compromised.</p>
<p><b>What is and isn’t true:</b> Legalistically, it is obvious that the City officially does City rezoning. In practice, however, the CLC-Band partnership could exert considerable influence over rezoning and subdivision decisions. Unless the agreements are renegotiated, the City neither owns any of the Lands nor has any chance of owning any of the Lands prior to the completion of the rezoning and subdivision, which under the details of the agreements would likely mean the beginning of 2013.</p>	
<p><b>The details:</b> If the Commission excludes the Lands from the ALR, the City will be in a precarious position during the period in which it is aspiring to own part of the Lands. By getting the Lands out of the ALR, the City will have taken care of an essential task that the partners needed the City to perform for them, but the City will still get nothing unless it continues to keep the partners happy for years. Under the Purchase Agreement, “<b>Acceptable Rezoning</b>” involves <b>Richmond City Council permitting the development</b> of the Development Lands (CLC-Band lands) <b>on the basis of “a Comprehensive Development Plan and other terms and conditions approved</b> by Richmond City Council and <b>by CLC and the Limited Partnership (as Joint Venturers)</b> . . .” (emphasis added). Combined with other sections (4.4 and 4.5), that provision practically gives the partners a veto. If the rezoning and subdivision condition precedents are not met (to their satisfaction), the City loses the right to buy what has been thought of as “the City lands.”</p>	
<p><b>How it might play out:</b> Somewhat fortunately, the CLC-Band partners would have a strong motivation to let the City get its lands. After all, that would endow the new residential subdivisions with green space that the City first pays to obtain and then pays to maintain, with covenants that essentially require the City to continue forever. However, City politicians who have spent years saying the Garden City Lands agreements are such a great deal will also have a strong motivation to make sure the “great deal” doesn’t fall through, since that eventuality would leave the CLC-Band partners with <i>non-ALR</i> land (worth many times its ALR-value cost) and leave the deal-touting City politicians with egg on their faces.</p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The City’s regulatory control over the development lands, while “unfettered” in a legalistic sense, would be well shy of “<b>full</b> regulatory control” in practice.</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> The City is not credible.</p>	

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b></p> <p>In the communications with the public that are included in the application, the Garden City Lands development has been depicted as some sort of idyllic complete community, even though there is no thought of school space for the predictable number of school-age students, e.g., over 1,000 public elementary students.</p>	<p><b>Revelation 8 on Aug. 14:</b></p> <p>Despite citizens pointing out the school need at Council meetings and the public hearing, five months later Mayor Brodie was still talking about “the development of complete communities,” giving the impression that the proposed future Garden City Lands community would be in that category.</p>
<p><b>Details:</b> Surely, a complete community large enough for four schools would not have <i>zero schools</i>.</p> <p>The only documented estimate of Garden City Lands population is for 14,650 residents, even if the CLC-Band partners get only half the 136 acres (but about 17,000 residents if they get more land due to the trade centre not being built). On the basis of 2006 Canada Census and Richmond School District figures, that would result in over 1,000 public elementary students. Maybe the secondary students could travel elsewhere, but sending over 1,000 Garden City Lands elementary students across busy thoroughfares to other parts of Richmond would not be consistent with a “complete community” even if there were room in neighbouring schools, which there is not.</p> <p>Citizens brought this up at Council meetings and the public hearing—with essentially no response. (Typically, the mayor would turn to a staff manager, who would refer to a school board chair memo that is not relevant to the question.) Even with elementary schools much larger than the Richmond average of around 325, there would have to be at least two elementary schools, each requiring about seven acres. The requirement could be as high as one secondary and three elementary schools.</p> <p>The mayor has said that the acreage would not come from the City lands. The application project manager, Randy Fasan of CLC, was asked about it, and his response was reported in a March 21, 2008, <i>Richmond News</i> article titled “You guys have been hog-tied: Council argues it has no choice but to ask for ALR exclusion.” The article refers to a dialogue between school district treasurer Ken Morris (seeking possible school sites on the Garden City Lands) and Mr. Fasan, who told Mr. Morris to “look to the Department of National Defense Lands next door.”</p> <p>When the project manager and the City just brush off the issue of schools (requiring approximately 14–28 acres) like an annoying flea, they are obviously not looking ahead with much foresight toward the development of a complete community on the Lands.</p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The “complete community” on the Lands is a platitude, not a plan.</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> Planning for major effects of the proposed development is absent.</p>	
<p><b>Bonus significance:</b> The Department of National Defence (DND) land immediately east of the Garden City Lands is already being thought of as the next ALR domino to fall in Richmond.</p>	

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b></p> <p>The idea of an Agricultural Endowment Fund is treated repeatedly and interminably as though it exists in a substantial-enough way to enable a net (measurable) benefit to agriculture.</p>	<p><b>Revelation 9 on Aug. 14:</b></p> <p>Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie made statements like “The Musqueam and CLC have ten years after rezoning approval to pay the full \$10 million.” (Fiction, I think.)</p>
<p><b>More examples of what the mayor said:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. “The Richmond Agricultural Advisory Committee endorsed the concept for an endowment.”</li> <li>2. “Each year we’ll put in extra money from the City’s own resources. That could add up to over \$3.75 million.”</li> <li>3. “The CLC and the Musqueam will make contributions.” “They’ve agreed to pay it, and I’m sure they will live up to their obligations.”</li> </ol> <p><b>The truth about those examples:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Agricultural Advisory Committee minutes (May 10, 2007, p. 6) show that the AAC resolutions were actually to “Accept and endorse, <i>in principle</i>, the <i>proposed components</i> of the <i>agricultural framework</i> . . . as a <i>working draft</i> document <i>subject to further review</i> at forthcoming AAC meetings” (my emphasis added). Obviously (a) that was preliminary, (b) the endowment aspect didn’t merit a mention in the resolutions, and (c) there have been no resolutions about the endowment fund idea at AAC meetings in the subsequent 15 months.</li> <li>2. Richmond Council has not passed any resolution to budget “up to over” \$3.75 million for the endowment payment purpose. As far as I can tell, it’s just an idea that is being tossed around.</li> <li>3. The only semblance of an agreement with CLC-Musqueam is a letter from CLC’s Doug Kester (available in the Dec. 13, 2007, staff report) that simply agrees to establish an endowment fund. It <i>doesn’t even imply</i> that CLC or the Musqueam would directly make any payments, and other parts of the application suggest that any payments would come from developers. No other agreement documents appear in the application documents that have been made public. Maybe something has been talked about, but, to borrow an apt cliché, talk is cheap.</li> </ol> <p><b>In summary:</b> The agricultural endowment fund does not exist as a particular concept endorsed by the Richmond Agricultural Advisory Committee. The \$3.75 million in City “payments” does not exist as money budgeted by Council. The CLC-Musqueam “obligations” to contribute \$10 million do not exist in any agreements included in the application.</p> <p>Note: Even if the fund existed, I would ask the Commission to <i>not</i> accept offers to buy ALR land exclusions. (Besides, the reasonable payment in this case would be at least \$100 million.)</p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The Agricultural Endowment Fund is a hoax.</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> The City is not credible.</p>	

<p><b>Untruth in the application:</b></p> <p>Agricultural economist Dan Schroeter: “Many kilometres of antenna cabling.” That contradicts CLC’s Randy Fasan’s 2006 assertion that “the land is clean, aside from some copper wire at the base of the now-demolished coast guard radio towers” (<i>Richmond Review</i>, May 6, 2006).</p>	<p><b>Revelation 10 on Aug. 14, 2008:</b></p> <p>Randy Fasan re DFO reports: “including disclosure that thousands of metres of copper antenna wire shielding were left behind.”</p> <p>Applicants’ consultant Ned Pottinger: “risk of contamination that needs to be investigated and remediated.”</p>
<p><b>Details:</b> The application project manager, Randy Fasan, probably said something true in the course of contradicting himself, but it is hard to decide what’s true. The 2006 Fasan quote is from an article at <a href="http://www.yourlibrary.ca/community/RichmondReview/Archive/RR20060506/morenews.html">http://www.yourlibrary.ca/community/RichmondReview/Archive/RR20060506/morenews.html</a>, and it opens a can of worms in view of the new revelations. Here are some excerpts:</p> <p>Studies of the soil and groundwater, which appear to have occurred in the late 1990s, turned up “hydrocarbons, metals such as lead, copper and zinc, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dibenzodioxins (dioxins) and dibenzofurans (furans) at levels above agricultural regulatory standards.”</p> <p>Canada Lands Company director of urban design and planning Randy Fasan said as part of the sale, the fisheries department handed over its previous environmental assessment work of the site. Those reports, Fasan said, indicate the land is clean, aside from some copper wire at the base of the now-demolished coast guard radio towers.</p> <p>“We’re not going to buy a pig-in-a-poke and expose ourselves to having to remediate a whole bunch of stuff that was left there by others,” he said. “Our in-house engineer has reviewed those reports and we’re satisfied that the lands are clean.”</p> <p>Fasan said defence lands have certain levels of contamination because of military equipment and activities the lands are used for. “But in the case of these (Garden City) lands, they just weren’t dirty to begin with,” he said.</p>	
<p><b>Implications:</b> While the possible cabling/shielding should be investigated, in my view the greater cause for concern is suspected contaminants such as lead and PCBs. If the newly resurfaced concerns are not just one more ruse to sway the Commission, surely the transfer of the Lands from the federal government to CLC should not have happened prior to a full environmental assessment. And in the current aggravated mess, surely no change in the status of the Lands should occur until the assessment is done—by credible experts at arm’s length from the applicants.</p>	
<p><b>Direct significance:</b> The current or prior owners should take responsibility for an arm’s length environmental assessment of the Lands, with remediation as needed, before any change in status of the property except perhaps a return of direct ownership to the federal government.</p>	
<p><b>General significance:</b> The application project manager has lost any remaining credibility.</p>	

<b>Other gems revealed on Aug. 14</b>	<b>Quick appraisal of the gems</b>
<p>Mayor Malcolm Brodie talked about how much the City has done for agricultural viability, and the applicants brought in farmer Bill Zylmans and retired nursery owner Bill Jones for the panel’s property inspection, presumably to give the impression of farmers supporting the City.</p>	<p>Bill Jones wrote to the Commission on June 7, 2008, about “the glaring lack of irrigation waters and proper drainage” as “largely ignored issues.” Bill Zylmans made similar comments to the Richmond Review (Aug. 27, 2007). That says it all about what the City has done.</p>
<p>Randy Fasan re clean-up of contaminants: “That will be up to the purchaser and seller to sort out, as with any other site.”</p>	<p>It’s a safe bet that one more thing the City would be told to do is to pay for the clean-up of wiring and contaminants on the “City land.”</p>
<p>Ned Pottinger re irrigation of the Lands: “The only obvious source of water is the domestic system.”</p>	<p>Consultant Joost Bakker’s report in the application recognizes that storm water could be stored on the Lands for irrigation.</p>
<p>The mayor proposed using the City lands (47.6 scattered acres, or possibly 57.8) for almost everything anyone has suggested, including an “urban forest” and wetlands that would have a dual use for “storm water management.”</p>	<p>Even without the newly added forest, it is hard to fit all the uses on the <i>full 136 acres</i>, let alone 47.6. And flushing City Centre storm water into and out of wetlands, rather than using a large reservoir lake area, would be ecologically disastrous.</p>
<p>“By supporting urban agriculture on a significant portion of the site, it will build community awareness of agricultural practices. Council’s intention is to strengthen Richmond’s ties to commercial agriculture and to foster appreciation for all aspects of farming.”</p>	<p><i>Exactly.</i> However, Appendix 5 (Attach. 6, p. 5) includes a 27.5-acre sports tournament centre (a want that has been met in other ways). That’s along with storm water wetlands and the mayor’s forest. Where’s the space for urban agriculture? <i>Solution: Let’s think 136 acres, not 47.6 or 57.8.</i></p>
<p>Mayor Brodie: “The Musqueam strongly believe that they have aboriginal rights that entitle them to the entire Garden City Lands and with due process their rights will prevail.”</p>	<p>Keith Clarke, the senior lawyer hired by the City, said on Day 1 of the public hearings that those claims are “a bit of a red herring.” (Land claims like that, he pointed out, cover all of B.C.)</p>
<p>Mayor Brodie, as though extolling virtue: Council has not usually asked for exclusions and has “said <i>no</i> to suggestions involving hundreds of acres of farmland in the City.”</p>	<p>Yes, they block applications for exclusion of tiny lots that can’t bring in enough farm income to get farm property tax breaks—but promote this farmland speculation as advocate and speculator.</p>
<p>Mayor Brodie: The lands are not suitable for urban farming “but <i>they are suitable for urban agriculture</i>” (whatever that distinction means).</p>	<p><i>Thank you, Mayor Brodie!</i> You’ve now rejected consultant Dan Schroeter’s mistaken assertion that the Lands are <i>not</i> suitable for agriculture.</p>