



VIBRANT, DIVERSE, SUSTAINABLE

Jacque Dawes
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Community Sport and Cultural Development
Government of British Columbia
PO Box 9490, STN Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C., V8W 9N7

May 20, 2016

Dear Deputy Minister Dawes:

Re: Fire and rescue protection costs for the University Neighbourhoods

I write further to my letter to you of March 10 2016, in which we expressed concern about the impact of a proposal to recover the costs of fire and rescue protection services from market housing properties on the UBC campus. Upon further consideration of the matter, the University Neighbourhoods Association has now decided that it does not support this proposal further. The reasons for this decision are set out in this letter.

I wish to stress that the residents in the University Neighbourhoods are more than to pay their fair share of the costs of the services they receive. Indeed, we believe we have been doing so for some time.

When the development of market housing on campus commenced in the late 1990s, UBC undertook to “peg” the taxes and levies on the new development at the same rates, based on assessed value, as those prevailing in the City of Vancouver. Market housing properties on the campus have been paying those rates ever since. In the City of Vancouver, those rates have been, and are, sufficient to pay for one of the most sophisticated fire and rescue services in the province as well as a fully functional urban police force. Together, these costs represent, respectively, 5 percent and 10 percent of the City’s budget. It is our considered view, therefore, that residents have been paying a level of taxation sufficient to provide fire and rescue services,

even if these funds were not actually paid for these services because they were provided to UBC without charge by the province.

If fire and rescue costs, heretofore provided to the University without charge, are now to be incurred, then they are the University's responsibility and should not need participation by the province to resolve. Any issues arising from changed circumstances should be resolved within the framework of the existing agreements between UBC and its residents as represented by the UNA.

The proposed rural tax for fire and rescue protection would be imposed without any democratic control by those served as to the amount and type of service to be provided or the amount to be paid. History has shown that, once such arrangements are put in place through provincial legislative or regulatory action, they are very difficult to amend.

We appreciate the time and effort your staff have expended to seek a solution to this matter. Please be assured that we are willing to discuss with UBC how fire and rescue service costs are handled within the framework of the existing relationship between UBC and its residents, and any changes that may be required going forward.

Yours truly,



Richard Alexander
Chair, UNA Board of Directors

CC Jan Fialkowski, Executive Director, University Neighbourhoods Association

Michael White, Associate Vice President, Campus and Community Planning, UBC