



VIBRANT, DIVERSE, SUSTAINABLE

March 31, 2017

The Honourable Peter Fassbender, M.L.A.
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
Government of British Columbia
PO Box 9056, STN PROV GOVT,
Victoria, B.C., V8W 9E2

Dear Minister:

Re: Fire Service Charge - University Neighbourhoods at UBC

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the University Neighbourhoods Association (UNA) to inform you of the UNA Board's position with respect to the fire service charge imposed by your government on property owners in the UNA neighbourhoods.

As you know, at its meeting in September 2016, the UNA Board approved a resolution asking UBC to enter into a 5-year contribution agreement with the provincial government for fire protection services delivered to UBC's campus neighbourhoods (i.e. the UNA neighbourhoods), and to pay for these services through our UBC services levy.

The UNA understood that if it did not approve the resolution to pay for fire protection costs through the UBC Services Levy, the Ministry might revisit the methodology of calculating the fire service charge, in addition to being subject to a tax collection fee of 5.25%. Thus, the resolution was supported out of an interest in mitigating potential additional costs. In light of this, one of the recitals accompanying the resolution states that the UNA does not support the province's decision to establish a separate levy or tax for fire protection services. This continues to be the Board's position. Our view is that the charge is unfair and unjustified.


When the issue of fire protection cost recovery was initially raised with the UNA, a comparison of the taxation of our community with that of the UEL was made and was used in the government's rationale for imposing a charge or an additional tax for fire protection on property owners in the UNA neighbourhoods. However, this comparison was based on incorrect and misleading information. The province already taxes us unfairly relative to UEL residents, and the fire service charge makes the unfairness even greater. The comparison of our situation with that of unincorporated areas other than the UEL does not take into account the purpose for which general rural property tax is levied nor differences between us and those other areas.

We wish to stress that the residents in the University Neighbourhoods are more than willing to pay their fair share of the costs of the services they receive. Indeed, we believe we have been doing so. However, of the more than \$2million dollars collected annually by the Province for the General Rural Tax, we assert that we receive very little by way of services delivered directly to the local area. The UNA is wholly responsible for the maintenance of the neighbourhood roads within UBC, and residents pay a designated Police Tax collected through the Rural Tax.

We ask that the Government informs us of what other specific benefits UBC residents receive in return for paying this tax and the amount of the tax that funds such benefit.

On behalf of all UNA residents who firmly believe that they have been paying their fair share of taxes but receiving few services in return, we respectfully ask that the Ministry reconsider the decision to impose this unfair charge.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Alexander
Chair, UNA Board of Directors

cc: David Eby, MLA, Vancouver-Point Grey
Jacquie Dawes, Deputy Minister, Community, Sport and Cultural Development
Professor Santa J. Ono, President, University of British Columbia
Michael White, Associate Vice President, Campus and Community Planning, UBC