

Kirk LaPointe's Credibility Problem: the NPA

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Friday, November 14, 2014

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Don't vote for the NPA. Any of them.

LaPointe is the NPA's mayoral candidate. The NPA stands for the Non-Partisan Association. If you actually believe the NPA has no partisan ideology, please don't vote. [For almost a decade I've been writing about how the brand notion of the NPA is fundamentally a lie](#). No one is non-partisan in the sense of not being ideological. The NPA is a right wing, neoliberal, corporate-loving, public service-hating party aligned with the likes of Reagan, Thatcher, Mulroney, Harper, Gordon Campbell, Christy Clark and everyone else who worships Adam Smith's Invisible Hand of the market as God.

Ideology is good. It reflects our values and principles about how we want to live, how we want to enrich our communities and what kind of world we want to leave to our children. Ideology is good. We should embrace ours and learn more about what we believe. It is not a weakness or a crutch or something to be ashamed of. Yet the NPA hopes you will see some nobility in them pretending to be objective and free of ideological influence. That's just a lie.

Read these little snippets of NPA wisdom and let's re-spin them below. Keep your barf bag handy.

NPA mayoral candidate Kirk LaPointe handed out flyers at Broadway and Cambie, and made a point to be the focus of his media briefing.

"Gregor Robertson can say he's sorry, but it's too late. He's failed to keep Vancouver affordable because he has been distracted by other issues - many outside his jurisdiction," said LaPointe in a statement.

"We will put Vancouver families ahead of developers who are selling to overseas buyers. We will create childcare spaces and reduce the financial pressures on Vancouverites," he added.

[Mayoral candidates in final dash for votes in tight race | Vancouver Observer](#).

1. "*Affordability*" is code for reducing municipal taxes, usually more for businesses than for real human beings, cutting city services and increasing user fees. People who talk about affordability like this refer to taxes as a burden as opposed to an investment into making our community and world a better place. They are to be shunned and not elected. Leave them in their solitary, greed-filled isolation with the other social pariahs.
2. Robertson is "*distracted by other issues--many outside his jurisdiction.*" This is code for how the NPA supports more fossil fuel development, more pipelines and more tankers trying not to play pinball in our waters. Cities are not in charge of those developments, so the NPA talks about how Vancouver should stay out of those discussions because we're all sitting at the kids' table while the grown ups deal with that. But municipalities have a legitimate right to reflect the will of people. Burnaby is taking on Kinder Morgan in their jurisdiction because they can, and they should.

Climate change is a scourge on humanity and it reflects the worst of our species that we aren't rapidly trying to avert our man-made disaster. But hiding behind rhetoric of issues beyond our jurisdiction is how the NPA allows its corporate friends to have faith in the loyalty of their NPA lapdogs. Vision certainly hasn't stopped increased tanker traffic in our waters, partly because it is actually outside the city's regulatory jurisdiction, but opposing this foolish increase in fossil fuel development is better than trying to duck it completely, as the NPA is doing.

3. The NPA will *"put Vancouver families ahead of developers who are selling to overseas buyers."* This plays to the latent and sometimes overt racism and xenophobia in Vancouver. "We" are sick of "those people" from "away" using "our" housing market as a speculation zone. "We" wish "they" would go away and not make our homes so unaffordable. But wait, "we" make a fortune from selling "our" homes to "them," so we're basically hypocrites. The NPA has no policies or legal suggestions to ensure that only the anointed "we" get access to "our" homes so "they" can't come here. Instead, closet bigots and racists will vote for them because they think it will keep "them" away from "our" city. Don't give in to the rhetoric of racism and division.
4. *"We will create childcare space"?* Their platform says they will *"utilize underused space in schools for childcare opportunities; [and] provide at least five more instruction days for students by reducing the number of District Closure days."* These are actually great ideas, talked about by many for years. But how will they do that? Their platform elaborates, which is where we find their problems [emphasis is mine]: *"The education of students must be at the centre of Vancouver School Board decisions, and **there should be no room for ideology.** The NPA is committed to providing the best education possible to Vancouver students. **By examining alternative sources of revenue, such as renting out excess space in schools to local partners and examining grants, sponsorships or partnerships compatible with Vancouver's educational values, an NPA School Board will work with the community to deliver the education our students deserve.**"* So much for trusting them on that. Firstly, ironically, school district funding is beyond the city's jurisdiction which means to reduce district closure days they would need to get more provincial K-12 money. Short of that they'd have to [privatize with Chevron in the classroom](#) and other corporate partnerships. The NPA also thinks we are stunningly stupid because they said there should be no room for ideology in school board decisions. The mere existence of public education is based on one kind of ideology. Neoliberals want to stop the poor from getting educated. That's why they cut funding in the first place. The NPA [sic] wants to look at alternate sources of revenue [fundraising, corporate sponsorship, advertising to captive impressionable audiences in classrooms], renting out space [but to whom?], and looking at partnerships [again with whom?] with those compatible with our educational values. Values is another word for ideology. The NPA's ideology is about free market privatization and abandoning ideological principles like equity so that the poor get equal access to high quality education, just like the rich. The rich want to keep poor kids stupid. It makes it easier to rule the world that way. And the last thing we should do is partner with any corporation or group that actually aligns with the NPA non-ideological [sic] ideology.
5. Finally, the NPA wants to *"reduce the financial pressures on Vancouverites."* Like above, this means cutting taxes because they are a "burden," a "pressure" to be avoided. But again, when we do that, we have to cut services and increase user fees, which are a regressive tax on the poor. That means more expensive rinks and pools, fewer library days, less park maintenance and improvement, dirtier streets, more dangerous roadways, weaker water infrastructure, less reliable sewage systems, worse resilience when flash floods take out infrastructure [do you remember Father's Day this summer and North Vancouver a couple weeks ago?], inferior mitigation of

effects of climate change, and so on and so on.

So once again, this year, the NPA has a credibility problem. If you vote for any of them, you are being duped. Caveat emptor. But don't say I didn't warn you.