

Wreck Beach Preservation Society

and

Pacific Spirit Park Society

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Showdown over UBC Towers

On Monday, November 22, 2004, the Wreck Beach Preservation Society (WBPS), the Pacific Spirit Park Society (PSPS) and local citizens will take on the University of British Columbia regarding its plan to build four 20 storey buildings towering over the world famous beach. The highly controversial development is on the agenda of the GVRD-UBC Joint Committee meeting, taking place at the GVRD head office, 4330 Kingsway, Burnaby, starting at 5 p.m.

Wreck Beach is part of Pacific Spirit Regional Park, which is protected from development impacts by its Park Plan and by the Official Community Plan (OCP). The GVRD has echoed the two Societies' concerns about the impact on the pristine, natural views of the cliffs from the beach, on the privacy of beach visitors, and on cliff stability and erosion. The first of the four towers has already received a development permit and is under construction; with another story or two, Tower 1 will be seen from the beach.

"The recent land slide on the cliff face below the development site is Mother Nature's warning that these Towers will be bad for the Park," cautioned Judy Williams, president of the WBPS.

"It is obvious that these Towers, as currently planned, will destroy the natural, unspoiled views of the Park's forested cliffs from the beach. To comply with the OCP, UBC must mitigate this negative impact. PSPS and WBPS call on UBC to halt construction until a full public review of the project's impacts is undertaken," said Ed Chessor, Chair of the Pacific Spirit Park Society.

On October 29, 2004, the GVRD passed a resolution to "require UBC conduct a full public review, including consultation with the Musqueam, regarding the impact of the planned residences on the park to meet requirements of the Regional Park Management Plan".

"The public is entitled to review and comment on the studies UBC has commissioned for the Towers, and UBC is obliged to consider this input. Public consultation can only assist UBC in properly mitigating the Towers' negative impacts," stated Lara Tessaro, legal counsel to WBPS.

Yet to date, UBC has not released its environmental and geotechnical studies to concerned citizens, despite a second GVRD resolution advocating their release.

The agenda and associated reports for the Joint Committee meeting are located at <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/board/agendas/04comagendas/GVRD-UBC/november/agenda.htm>. Information about the WBPS's 21,000-signature petition and letter-writing campaign opposing the Towers can be found at www.wreckbeach.org.

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