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Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Neutac 5.1 Speakers (#511750) advertised in our current flyer (ending Aug. 29th) will not be available.

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news

Kennedy Stewart thinks party has 'lost control'

SFU professor questions Vision Vancouver brand

By Sandra Thomas
Staff writer

WHILE SOME political observers might believe the number of hopefuls seeking a Vision Vancouver nomination is a sign of the party's popularity, political analyst Kennedy Stewart has another theory.

"It looks to me like Vision has lost control of its brand," said Stewart, a political scientist at SFU. "On the other hand the NPA has been in this game a long time and knows how to protect its brand."

Of particular interest is the number of people declaring a run for a Vision nomination for parks board. So far 11 Vancouverites have declared they want to run for a seat on the seven-person board under the Vision banner. This is the first time Vision, which formed just prior to the 2005 civic election, has run candidates for parks board.

There was talk of a Vision/COPE joint slate to run for seats on council, school board and parks board to ensure the vote isn't split leading to another NPA majority. But with less than three months before the Nov. 15 civic election and no comment from either party, that joint slate looks less likely.

Stewart believes many of these wannabe politicians—which for Vision includes a tattoo artist who enjoys fire-arms and grenades—have no idea how much work is involved in being a parks board commissioner, or how little



Kennedy Stewart

commissioners are paid. The chair of the board receives \$10,000 a year with a \$5,000 allowance, while a commissioner makes \$8,000 a year with a \$4,000 allowance.

"I don't think they have a clue about the number of hours those folks put in," said Stewart, who previously worked for the parks board as an advocate for youth workers. "Park board members are some of the most respected politicians in the city because of the long hours they put in and their work on local issues. This is not a throwaway position."

Stewart noted a seat on parks board is widely regarded as a good way to groom people for positions on council, as well as the provincial and federal governments.

"This is not just a lark. This is not just, 'I think I'll throw my hat in the ring,'" said Stewart. "It takes real commitment and the NPA knows this."

Stewart said on paper Vision's application process to

become a candidate appears to be more onerous than the NPA's. But, he added, it appears Vision has thrown away its rule book. "People are just announcing they want to run for Vision and don't even look at the rules," said Stewart. "And Vision is letting them do it. It looks like Vision has lost control of the process."

Vision co-chair Carolyn Askew said allowing people to declare they want to run for Vision before even starting an application to run—and allowing them to use the party's logo on their personal websites—raises the profile of the young party.

"We're encouraging people to say they want to run for Vision prior to formal approval," said Askew. "It shows the level of enthusiasm they have for the party."

She added that merely because someone wants a Vision nomination doesn't mean they've been approved. She said half of the 11 people who have so far declared have completed the formal application.

"Vision is treating this very seriously and is seeking a majority on council, school board and park board," she said. "But when it comes to possible candidates we have an embarrassment of riches. And in some cases we've encouraged them to seek a nomination they think they can win, like the park board, but we are not treating park board like a throwaway, not at all."

Vision Vancouver holds its nomination meeting Sept. 20.



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