

**Notes for remarks by
Mayor Kennedy Stewart
Inauguration Address
November 5, 2018**

Honourable Justice Dhillon, Libby Davies, Councillors, dignitaries, and honoured guests. I'm so glad you could attend today and bid you all a very warm welcome.

I'd like to acknowledge we are on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish People: the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh.

First, thank you to all our city staff for your hard work today and always, and your constant and unwavering dedication to our city.

Thank you to those who participated in the 2018 election: in particular, Ken Sim, Shauna Sylvester, Hector Bremner, and Wai Young who took up the democratic challenge, presented bold ideas, and stayed away from the divisive politics we see around the globe. You should all be proud of your efforts in this election.

Thank you Mayor Gregor Robertson and the outgoing council who worked so hard to tackle climate change and build our reputation abroad.

It is worth remembering Mayor Robertson was first sworn in at the height of the 2008 global recession. I would like to thank him for steering us through that trying time and helping the City avoid the worst consequences of a global economic crisis as well as his many other accomplishments.

We are indeed in an unfamiliar situation here in Vancouver. An independent mayor. A set of new and renewed political parties. And like the voters of this city, a council that represents a mixture of ideas and approaches.

This change in situation means we can and must think about things differently, and that starts with how we all treat one another.

For me the key word is "respect". My mom Cathy Stewart is here today with my wife Dr. Jeanette Ashe and brother Evan Stewart.

My mom always says “begin as you mean to proceed”.

So I pledge here today to put “respect” at the centre of my approach: to inform residents and council members of my intentions, and to listen to your ideas before making decisions.

It is up to all of us to serve as examples for our community and strive to foster an environment of openness and transparency with a goal of building trust across the city. I will do my best to live by these words.

To seek historical guidance as to how we will proceed over the next four years, We have to go back to the 1980s when Mike Harcourt was elected as an independent mayor.

Mike tells me such councils perhaps have the greatest potential for success as all voices matter equally.

While his councils, which of course included Libby, were often expected to fail and to fall into bickering and discord, instead they flourished. They marked Vancouver’s transition from Milltown to Metropolis and started us on our journey to becoming a true world city.

What’s happening around the world and the work of past councils illustrate a lesson taught to me by my academic mentor: Simon Fraser University’s Dr. Patrick Smith.

Cities can either be globalized or globalist.

Globalized cities are held hostage by external forces that shape civic policy and international standing. They are ships foundering in stormy seas.

Globalist cities develop proactive strategies and become significant players in shaping how the world works. They have the wind at their backs and set the course which others follow.

Vancouver has been globalist in the past: embracing and celebrating multiculturalism and the LGBTQ community, championing a four pillars approach to tackling addiction, and leading the way when it comes to protecting our environment.

But it is a difficult feat to repeat as our city is also beset by a multitude of hostile global forces: a volatile world economy, rising inflation and interest rates, housing speculation, a widening gap between the rich and poor, and a flood of deadly opioids into our neighbourhoods.

We have a choice to make over the next four years. We can acquiesce to these negative external challenges, or we can view them as an opportunity to show other cities how Vancouver innovated and overcame.

We can and must be a globalist city.

As in many other cities around the world, our single greatest challenge is the lack of affordable housing in Vancouver.

The consequences of our housing crisis ripples out into every part of our civic fabric.

It doesn't matter who you are or where in this city you go, the stress of unaffordability hangs over Vancouver, stifling its creativity and energy and promise of opportunity.

But it doesn't need to be this way.

This diversity of views on our council provides a unique opportunity to explore a multitude of ideas on how to solve our affordability crisis and show the world it is possible to successfully address this problem.

And the best part is that every elected councillor champions ideas that can help make that happen, including:

Councillor Carr's pledge to building a cleaner and greener city;

Councillor DeGenova's commitment to a more family friendly Vancouver;

Councillor Fry's promise to stand up for renters;

Councillor Swanson's passion to provide for those struggling with poverty and addiction;

Councillor Hardwick's vision for cutting-edge public consultation;

Councillor Wiebe's call for complete communities;

Councillor Boyle's push for mixed neighbourhoods;

Councillor Dominato's innovative property philanthropy policy;

Councillor Bligh's quest to ensure we keep Vancouver's charm while embracing change; and,

Councillor Kirby-Yung's continuing drive to renew our aging infrastructure.

All councillors have thoughtful ideas.

All councillors bring a tremendous amount of value and experience.

All councillors care deeply about our city.

By working together we can overcome globalizing forces, make Vancouver an even more globalist city, and provide a beacon of hope for other urban centres.

I want us to build a Vancouver that leads the world:

in livability; in social justice; in economic development; in tackling climate change; in cultural production; in fun; and in coolness.

I know we can do it if we work together. We've got everything we need. Wealth, talent, intelligence, diversity, and opportunity.

While I am excited about the work and opportunities ahead of us, I have to acknowledge deep structural problems we'll all have to work hard to overcome.

Our council has a record-setting eight women which is a tremendous outcome. We need a more women friendly city and I have great hope this council will move us forward on this matter.

But our council does not reflect the ancestral diversity of our city. For example, not a single person of Chinese, South Asian, or Filipino descent holds a council seat.

This imbalance is deeply concerning to me.

As such, to the over 50% of our population whose ancestry is not represented, I make this promise: I will do everything I can to reach out to your communities and to make sure the decisions we make at City Hall take your experiences and realities into account.

And I will do all I can to ensure fair representation on city advisory boards and hearings.

We also do not have anyone on council who is of Indigenous descent. Under the leadership of the previous mayor and council, Vancouver was designated a City of Reconciliation. I am committed to a sustained relationship of mutual respect and understanding with local First Nations and the Urban Indigenous community.

Thank you everyone once again for being here and for all the ways you as individuals help make our city healthier and more inclusive.

Not only do we on city council need to work together and to respect one another, but the same is true of everyone in our city.

It is vitally important that public discourse in our city be respectful, open, and curious. I look forward to helping make this happen and getting down to work to make Vancouver a city that works for everyone.

Thank you.