My name is Jonathan Kerr, to those I know well and to those who are new.

In my role on Comox Council, I do my best to represent you.

I am not the Lorax, you can see that with ease.

But today, and every day, I speak for the trees.

I wrote this poem for you, with some fire and some juice.

I also had a little help from my colleague, Dr. Seuss.

What I see over there makes me incredibly mad.

The only times I’m not angry is when I feel sad.

The trees in our Town are a gift from Mother Earth.

Many have been here since long before my birth.

They give us shade overhead when it is too hot.

This is a lifesaving benefit that just can’t be bought.

Urban forests are full of birds, animals, even snails.

They give us a place to relax when we walk through their trails.

When it’s windy the trees move, and when it’s calm, they rest.

But the forest is always alive, as a mama bird builds her nest.

There’s so much we can’t see that happens below ground.

The trees are connected by fungi and communicate all around.

The biodiversity of our forests is something we must protect.

Working together, our shared future we can affect.

The fate of this former forest was decided long ago.

The land was pre-zoned for single family homes, a terrible blow.

The Town explored all options to correct this fatal flaw.

We had meetings, consulted experts, and reviewed the law.

We begged and pleaded with those that owned the land.

But in the end, we could not alter what had been planned.

Did I mention that I’m angry, and mad, and sad?

But motivated to do something, I pulled out my notepad.

I made a list of some ways in which each of us can act.

Ways to prevent another forest in Town from being sacked.

The first thing you can do is actually an easy feat.

The Town’s Parks and Trails survey is quick to complete.

You can let Comox know why you love the Town’s parks.

Is it where you get exercise, or where your dog barks?

Are parks where your kids play and explore nature all around?

Is it where your day starts or where your best ideas are found?

Please visit the Town’s website and click on this survey.

It might just be the most important thing you do later today.

Another thing you can do is get involved with the Town’s OCP.

That’s the Official Community Plan for you and me.

It is the single most important document used by the Town,

To direct the developments that are happening all around.

Back in 2011 is when it was last renewed.

And its outdated directions are why the trees are getting screwed.

Later this year there will be lots of opportunities to get involved.

With our collective voices this problem can be solved.

We need your thoughts and ideas about the future of this place.

Do we want to grow smartly, or build more houses like it’s a race?

How big do we want this community to grow?

Whatever your answer is, the Town needs to know.

When many citizens share their concerns, it can be an antidote,

And can change politicians’ opinions prior to a key vote.

Please give your feedback whenever you see the letters OCP.

Don’t do it for me, do it for a tree.

Finally, I leave you with Dr. Suess’ famous words at the end of my rant.

May these words be a seed you take to heart and plant.

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,

Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.

Jonathan Kerr, April 20, 2024