

# Gord Hume breaks from city-building books with rom com-mystery-satire

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This is a book you wouldn't see coming, not from a former politician and author of seven books on city building, community and leadership.

Then, again, after all that heavy slogging, perhaps writing a romantic comedy novel was the mental rinse former London councillor and controller Gord Hume needed.

The 69-year-old four-term council member and businessperson - who has spent the last several years writing, talking and consulting about the challenges of building cities with an eye to the future - has published a novel titled Sapphire Blue.

"I had a terrific time writing it," said Hume in an interview a day before departing for his winter home on St. Pete Beach in Florida where he shares a condo with Carol Stephenson, retired dean of the Richard Ivey School of Business at Western University.

"I really enjoyed the creative energy it took to write and I really loved the characters, getting into the scenes. It was an enormous pleasure writing this book."

The book tells the story of Samantha Summers, who flees New York City after a bitter divorce and lands in a retirement community on the Gulf Coast of Florida only to become the primary suspect in a murder in a hot tub. At the same time, corruption at city hall is "threatening the peace and tranquility of the city," according to the book cover.

"I would write myself into corners and then having to write my way out was fun," said Hume. "But I was never blocked or terrified sitting down at the computer. It just flowed out."

Hume's other books include Getting Cities Right, The Leadership Crisis, Places and Spaces, 10 Trends for Smarter Communities, Taking Back Our Cities, The Local Food Revolution and Culture Planning for Creative Communities.

Since leaving politics in 2010, Hume has carved out a career as an adviser/consultant/speaker/author, traveling across Canada and the U.S. with other stops as far away as Europe, New Zealand and South Korea.

Hume is clearly enjoying his winters in the south, walking the beaches, swimming, the symphony and sports. He no longer plays golf, though, his joints still giving him enough trouble to keep him off the links.

"It's a very pleasant lifestyle," said Hume, who spends about five months a year in Florida. "The only ice I see is in my gin and tonic. There's lots of culture, lots of things to do.

"I write in the morning and at about noon my brain turns off and I play in the afternoon, usually starting with a walk on the beach and a swim."

Hume said his interest in creative writing dates back to his childhood.

"I was 11 when I started my first novel," said Hume. "It wasn't very good, but it's always been bubbling in me. I've always been very passionate about books and I needed a new challenge."

He started writing in Florida last fall and it took a year to write and rewrite the book, find a publisher and hold a copy of *Sapphire Blue* in his hand.

He describes his novel as a romantic comedy, murder mystery and "a satire on condo life," inspired by observations of his own complex of several hundred people.

There were several surprises along this creative journey for Hume. The first was a scene involving a drone.

"All of a sudden it just fit and became important to the story line and I have no idea where that came from. I've never even touched a drone," he said.

There was a bigger surprise to come.

"I was surprised to find out who the murderer turned out to be," he said, wondering at the creative process.

"It was great fun to write and I hope it's great fun for people to read."

Hume keeps himself informed on city issues, such as bus rapid transit. But does he miss the politics?

"I get frustrated with bad politics and bad politicians," said Hume. "Do I long to go back into city politics? No. I'm a firm believer in term limits: Get in, work hard and get out."

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Sapphire Blue: Former London city councillor Gord Hume's debut novel tells the story of a big city woman who moves to a small Florida city on the gulf side and is accused of murder as corruption threatens the peace and stability of the community. Published by Burnstown Publishing House, available online at <http://burnstownpublishing.com/> \$25 or at Oxford Book Shop, 262 Piccadilly Street, London, Ontario.