



Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee

Date: Tuesday, November 23rd, 2004
Place: Council Chambers
Richmond City Hall
Present: Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt, Vice-Chair
Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Derek Dang
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Bill McNulty
Also Present: Councillor Rob Howard
Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

The Chair indicated that he had to leave the meeting at 6:00 pm and that should the meeting proceed beyond that time Cllr. Evelina Halsey-Brandt would take over the Chair. Cllr. Steves also indicated that two referral motions would be added to the agenda.

MINUTES

1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee held on Tuesday, September 28th, 2004, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

DELEGATIONS

2. *Mr. Frank Klassen to provide an update from the Richmond Arenas Community Association.*

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Mr. Klassen was unable to attend the meeting and will instead attend a future meeting.

It was moved and seconded

That staff investigate the possibility of two tall ships coming to Richmond for one week prior to the Vancouver Tall Ships event.

CARRIED

It was moved and seconded

That staff review and report back on the viability of Steveston Community Centre as it exists today and in the future.

CARRIED

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION

3. **BRITANNIA HISTORIC ZONE DEVELOPMENT PLAN** (Report: August 31/04, File No.: 06-2025-20-003) (REDMS No. 1328307,1315592)

The Manager of Heritage and Cultural Services, Jane Fernyhough, and Mr. Bob Ransford, Chair of the Britannia Heritage Shipyard Advisory Committee, were present.

Mr. Ransford said that the Advisory Committee had been involved in the development of the comprehensive plan for the east area and the completion of the site. Mr. Ransford also said that the scope of the plan included the completion of all of the capital works for the site with timelines attached.

Ms. Fernyhough and Mr. Ransford then responded to questions from Committee regarding several issues, and in particular on:

- the provision of several parking spaces on site that resulted in an open view corridor through the site, especially to the main building, and better use of the open space;
- although a need for large areas that could be rentable was recognized a final analysis had not yet been completed;
- the marketing plan included in the budget would explore marketing opportunities for the site;
- two of the buildings will be restored to allow for public viewing;
- the cost difference of Phases 1 and 2;

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- completion of the entire site would occur in 2009; and
- maintenance of the site will be similar to that of a natural park.

It was moved and seconded

That:

- (1) *the Britannia Historic Zone Development Plan be adopted as presented (in the report dated August 31, 2004 from the Director, Recreation and Cultural Services) to set the blueprint for the capital development of the area;*
- (2) *the Britannia Business Plan capital priority list be amended as recommended by the Britannia Heritage Shipyard Advisory Committee.*

CARRIED

It was moved and seconded

That staff report back on the development of a marketing plan for the site.

CARRIED

Committee was advised that a marketing plan had been submitted as an additional level in the 2005 budget process.

4. **TRAM ROUTING OPTIONS**

(Report: November 5/04, File No.: 10-6510-05-01/2004-Vol 01) (REDMS No. 1351855, 1354865)

The Director of Recreation and Cultural Services, Kate Sparrow, and the Manager of Community Recreation Services, Vern Jacques, were present. In response to a question from the Chair regarding alternate routes, Mr. Jacques said that public consultation on the routes proposed by Council had determined a preference for one route over the other, however, the number of residents opposed to the tram in general was similar to those in favour.

Mr. Ron Schuss, Chair of the Richmond Railroad Heritage Society and a Richmond resident for almost 70 years, said that he was opposed to moving the tram to Surrey or abandoning the route in Steveston. Mr. Schuss then read a letter from the Heritage Society, a copy of which is on file in the City Clerks Office.

Discussion then ensued among Committee members, Cllr. Howard and Mr. Schuss, on several issues, including:

- although Mr. Schuss would like to see the route in place from the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, through the Britannia Heritage Shipyard site, to London Farm, if the route were to alter or only be partially constructed in the first phase, as long as the route tied in with the Steveston Community, it would still be supported;
- the possibility of using a replica tram;

3.

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- the corporate sponsors and volunteers that would be involved in the maintenance and operations of the line;
- the economics of running a limited schedule had not yet been determined;
- the protection of crossings, traffic and pedestrian activity had all been built into the 4.5 million cost factor;
- noise from one car should be minimal; and
- whether the City could seek additional funds by way of federal or provincial grants.

Mr. Bob Ransford said that this was not a new proposal, that in fact the Heritage Commission had discussed for the past 10 years how all of the heritage assets in Steveston might be linked and marketed, and that the tram would help attract the crowds that would appreciate the heritage sites. Mr. Ransford provided examples of similar type trams in Nelson, BC, and in New Orleans, both of which operate successfully. He then said that corporate support could be found for the tram, and that the Richmond Heritage Railroad Society had offered to run the tram.

Mr. Rob Flett, 310 - 12911 Railway Avenue, said that the tram had been de-commissioned for a number of reasons including that more modern modes of transportation were available. Mr. Flett said that this was still true today. Mr. Flett spoke about the flooding that periodically occurs in the Britannia area, and said that it was his opinion that any monies proposed for the tram would be better spent on upgrading the dyke. Further to this, Mr. Flett said that there were a number of ways that the whole Steveston area as a historical site could be improved and gave the example of linking the sites by water.

Ms. Carol Deshautel, representing the newly formed Steveston Business Group, which has 33 members, asked that additional information be provided to the business group as it would be seriously affected by the decision. As a resident of Steveston Ms. Deshautel also wanted to be included in the process.

Mr. G. Billan, a 25 year Sunnymede resident, said that he frequented Steveston 5 – 6 times per week and could not understand how the tram could be located within the congestion that exists in Steveston today. Mr. Billan did not think that Steveston to New Orleans as it was a small area that should remain cozy.

Mr. M. Sakai said that he had canvassed the Board of the Gulf of Georgia and as a result wanted to provide support for the tram in principal. Then, as a resident of Steveston, Mr. Sakai said that the noise factor would not be significant, and he provided an example to support this, and also that public safety would be mitigated by the lack of congestion on the roads as compared to the walkways.

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Further to this Mr. Sakai said that there was no evidence that property values would be negatively affected by the tram. He then spoke about his involvement as a member of the 1997-98 Steveston Waterfront Committee, and he read from the Steveston Area Plan downloaded from the City website. Mr. Sakai said that the many sites Steveston were attractive on their own but would be enhanced by yet another heritage attraction, and that a comparison could be made to Nelson and its waterfront tram, which was very successful.

Mr. Keith Litke, a resident of Steveston and also spokesperson for the Board of London Farm and the Richmond Museum Society, said that the Museum Society considered the tram to be an important part of Richmond heritage. Mr. Litke felt it would be a total waste if further study of the project was abandoned. As a private citizen Mr. Litke spoke about the vision that had resulted in London Landing and said that Steveston was becoming the envy of the Lower Mainland and a very desirable place to live due to its history and presence. Mr. Litke did not think that land values would be affected or that the overhead wires would be an issue.

Ms. T. Lakeman, General Manager of Tourism Richmond, said that the community of Steveston was rich in culture, heritage and entertainment, and that the tram would further benefit that. Ms. Lakeman said that Tourism Richmond did not favour one route over the other, but that the route should connect the boundaries of the heritage sites of Steveston while allowing residents and visitors to enjoy one more heritage attraction.

Mr. E. Sykes, 4760 Moncton Street, a Steveston resident, said that he and his wife enjoyed the peacefulness and quietness of the Steveston area and that he did not support the tram concept as the tram was a noisy, invasive, vibrating machine that would be an eyesore and he wanted a peaceful community unscarred by this proposal. He asked that his position also be considered.

Mr. B. Diston, 10560 Reynolds Drive, a member of the Richmond Heritage Railroad Society and a Richmond resident, said that he believed the tram to be historical and that it would be a positive move to link the heritage sites. Mr. Diston said that the society, with over 120 members, was a dedicated group most of whom were not developers. Mr. Diston believed there to be a lot of misrepresentation regarding noise and tram lines etc., noting that one car passing by every half hour would make minimal noise and would require only one very small wire. Further to this Mr. Diston said that he thought the tram was a done deal and that only the funding and operational plan were required as the right-of-way had existed prior to the first talks on the BC Packers plan. Mr. Diston said that he would be amenable to a two-stage plan if it meant having the tram.

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Mr. S. Matthews, 46-4500 Westwater Drive, expressed concern for the future of the Steveston waterfront, the jewel of Richmond with its unique beauty and historical significance. Mr. Matthews said that Richmond taxpayers had two different visions, but the waterfront should remain a place to gather and enjoy the ambience without having to look over one's shoulder for the tram. Mr. Matthews thought the waterfront could end up similar to the Stanley Park seawall with too many risk management and safety issues to mention. Mr. Matthews asked who would be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the tram barn and infrastructure, and also if other projects were not more worthy of consideration as well as more cost effective, i.e. a water taxi. Mr. Matthews submitted a petition containing 1200 names of those opposed to the tram a copy of which is on file in the City Clerks Office.

A resident of 4500 Westwater Drive said that she thought the money for the tram should be used to improve the heritage sites. It was thought that tourists came to Steveston to walk as well as look at the heritage sites, and that with the exception of London Farm which was further out, all were accessible.

Mr. M. Lee, 4500 Westwater Drive, asked who would be responsible for the liability insurance for public safety, and who would pay the associated costs.

Mr. D. Fairweather, 12391 Railway Avenue, said that the discussion was overweighted by the Heritage Railroad Society, and that he was disappointed that a basic question, 'did the community want the tram', had not been asked during the public process. Having lived in the City for twelve years, Mr. Fairweather said that Steveston was a jewel and should remain that way and be enhanced. Mr. Fairweather said that he had ridden the tram in the 1940's when traffic and safety were not an issue, and that the tram was noisy. Further to this, Mr. Fairweather said that placing the tram in Steveston within a mass of humanity did not make sense.

Having spoken to many residents on the walkway and also business owners within the community, Mr. Fairweather said that many were not impressed by the tram and felt that there should be another way. Mr. Fairweather further said that the tram could not be marketed as a stand-alone item and would have to be marketed in conjunction with other sites. The cost of the tram was considered an unreasonable price to pay for heritage and a link to the sites, as were the safety issues. It was suggested that the money be put instead into Steveston itself, as it was looking tired, leaving the sites themselves to draw visitors to Steveston. Mr. Fairweather left a written submission, a copy of which is attached as Schedule 1 and forms a part of these minutes.

Cllr. Howard left the meeting – 6:23 pm.

It was moved and seconded

That discussion on the abandoning plans to route Tram #1220 in Steveston be continued at the next meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting.

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Prior to the question being called the Chair apologized to those present who had not had an opportunity to speak, and it was agreed that those individuals could complete a sign-up sheet and that notification would occur prior to the next meeting.

The question was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

5. **MANAGER'S REPORT**

There were no reports.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (6:35 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Tuesday, November 23rd, 2004.

Councillor Harold Steves
Chair

Deborah MacLennan
Administrative Assistant

To: The Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee
Nov. 23/04

My name is Dave Fairweather: My wife and I have been residents of Richmond for over 12 years , moving to Steveston about 8 months ago.

We became aware of the Imperial Landing Waterfront Visioning Process and the possibility of an Interurban Tram running on a railway line across Steveston. We found it hard to believe and after some research, I wrote to Mayor Brodie and all Councillors, on June 23 and July 21, 2004 attempting to provide a rational review of the issues and suggesting that it was time to re-think the Tram Project.

I took the opportunity to review the following:

- a) The B.C. Packers 1998 application for Re-zoning & Subdivision.**
- b) The September 2002 Interurban Tram Feasibility Study.**
- c) The May 7, 2004 Staff Report re Tram Routing Options.**

In addition, I have talked with many people on the waterfront walkway; to people in the Village business community and also with some of the 'stakeholders' in the Steveston Community.

Resulting from this review, I am convinced that there is very little support, but very strong opposition, to the thought of a 35 ton, 50' long, 8 1/2' wide tram, operating on a railway line in the Village of Steveston and through the residential community, along the Bayview St./Westwater Drive corridor.

In assessing the Tram Project on the basis of justification; consequences and priorities, it just doesn't measure up as a project which would be in the best interests of the taxpayers of Richmond and particularly the residents of Steveston. Even if someone with deep pockets provided funding, we don't need it and we don't want it!!

Justification: - It formerly operated on a segregated right-of-way.

- It is now planned to run on a common right-of way, with all other forms of movement, from vehicles to the handicapped. This is not acceptable!!**
- This opens the operation to the risk of frequent and serious accidents.**
- The thought that the Tram in itself would be a significant draw of visitors to Steveston, to justify a start-up cost of \$7.2 million is beyond all reason.**
- To justify it on the basis that it would be the preservation of a City historical artifact, is an unreasonable price to pay in the interests of heritage, when the impact on the community is considered.**

Consequences: - The peace, quietness and the views along the waterfront walkway from the parking lot at the south foot of Railway Ave., over Phoenix Pond to No. 1 Road, attracts people by the hundreds on a nice summer day. Much credit to the Planners and the Developer. A real gem has been created.

- However, the clickity clack of steel wheels over the rail joints and the noise**

- of braking, along with the required sound of the whistle at each crossing will be very disruptive to a pleasant walk.
- There will also be a very negative visual impact from the 25 foot tall poles placed every 100 feet with extensions to hold the necessary power line. This is an unacceptable intrusion in the landscape of the area, which residents and visitors would have to live with 365 days of the year.
- Railway tracks in the roadway would be a hazardous element for cyclists, roller bladers, joggers and the handicapped with walkers and powered scooters.
- The ONNI development along the Bayview St./Westwater Drive corridor has brought into the residential community, many new townhomes and the two Copper Sky condominium buildings. Bordering on the north of Copper Sky, and to the east, there are similar structures which have been in place for some 10 to 16 years.
- The proposed tram line would run as close as 40 feet to the foundation of some of these buildings. The consequence of vibration is a real concern.

Priorities:

- We do not need an Interurban Tram to attract visitors to Steveston!!
 - . The history, location, uniqueness and shopping/business opportunities in the Village itself, are what has drawn visitors to Steveston over the years. At this time, it would seem appropriate if the business community and the City made a significant commitment to improving the freshness and appeal of the Village. Parking and lack of public washrooms are issues.
 - . Assuming that the waterfront visioning process for Imperial Landing will result in a very colourful, attractive and well planned site, this should become very significant in drawing visitors to the waterfront.
 - . It is most important that there be a major investment in the Britannia Heritage Shipyard, to bring it alive, as it has great potential as an important visitor attraction.
 - . The London Heritage Farm and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery are other heritage sites for which funds must be committed to broaden their scope, quality of presentation and public awareness.
- These are the assets which attract visitors to Steveston, as well as other special events (Tall Ships/Concordia/Salmon Festival etc.).
- A very high priority must be given to the allocation of funds to provide for the expansion and improvement of the facilities and services available in the Community of Steveston, to meet the needs of the significant growth in population.
 - . A new Community Centre such as Thompson; an expanded library; an indoor pool; a seniors center; deserve commitment in the Capital Plan.
- The ONNI development alone accounts for an increase of 590 housing units.
- The areas east of Trites Road and No. 2 Road are still under development.

Conclusion: - There is clearly no real need, nor justification or support for a railway line running through the Village and the residential community, along the Bayview St./Westwater Drive corridor. There are many other pressing needs requiring staff time and funding, not only in the Steveston Community but in other areas of Richmond. We urge you to make a decision which respects the voice of the residents of Steveston and reject the Tram Project!!