



General Purposes Committee

Date: Monday, December 17th, 2001

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Mayor Malcolm Brodie, Chair
Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Lyn Greenhill
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Rob Howard
Councillor Kiichi Kumagai
Councillor Bill McNulty
Councillor Harold Steves (4:02 p.m.)

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Mayor Brodie announced that the Ministry of Fisheries & Oceans had verbally agreed to the provision of funding for the dredging of Steveston Harbour to 3 meters, and that this dredging would be completed prior to August of 2002, in time for the Tall Ships event

In speaking to the matter, the Mayor thanked the Honourable Herb Dhaliwal, Minister, for his prompt attention, and it was agreed that once written confirmation had been received, that a letter of appreciation would be sent to him.

(Councillor Harold Steves entered the meeting at 4:02 p.m., during the above announcement.)

MINUTES

1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Monday, December 3rd, 2001, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

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MAYOR MALCOLM BRODIE

2. INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(Report: Dec. 6/01; File No.: 0100-20-ACIC1-01) (REDMS No. 572686)

Ms. Louise Hudson, a member of the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council (RCSAC), addressed the Committee on the proposed Intercultural Relations Committee. A copy of her submission is attached as Schedule A and forms part of these minutes.

In response to questions, Ms. Hudson confirmed that:

- the RCSAC would like to provide input into the creation of the terms of reference
- the RCSAC would like to be consulted on the composition of the committee
- the RCSAC would like to see a committee created which could address issues which were not part of the City's mandate; issues such as homelessness and the provision of services to individuals who speak languages other than English and who were not being reached by existing services
- the RCSAC had not reached any conclusions as to how the committee should be composed.

As a result of the discussion, the following **amended** motion was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

That staff recommend an appropriate committee membership make-up and prepare Terms of Reference, in consultation with the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council, for the establishment of an Intercultural Relations Advisory Committee, and bring forward a report on the above no later than the February 18, 2002 General Purposes Committee of Council.

Prior to the question on the motion being called, staff were directed to:

- (a) review the two previously created committees – “Co-ordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations” and “Intercultural Relations Advisory Committee”, to determine and report on, the strong and weak points of each committee;
- (b) include in the report, any uncompleted business from the former Intercultural Relations Advisory Committee;
- (c) include in the report, the names of key personnel and existing organizations which have intercultural commitments, which should be part of the committee; and

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- (d) with respect to the proposed terms of reference, report on whether the City wished to play a 'facilitator' or 'problem-solving' role, and provide information on the functions to be undertaken by the committee, to ensure that the committee performed as it was intended.

The suggestion was also made that the School Board be included in the committee.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

COMMUNITY SAFETY DIVISION

3. **REPLACEMENT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY BUILDINGS - FINANCING OPTIONS**

(Report: Oct. 24/01, File No.: 2052-02) (REDMS No. 580012, 539084)

The General Manager, Community Safety, Chuck Gale, briefly reviewed the report and recommendations with the Committee.

A lengthy discussion then ensued among Committee members and staff on the financing option being recommended by staff and whether a referendum on the matter should be submitted to the electorate at the November, 2002 general election.

In response to questions, advice was given that a referendum was not required to obtain approval to borrow the required funding as the City could simply increase taxes to generate the necessary revenue. Further advice was given that staff were concerned that if the replacement of the community safety buildings was submitted to referendum, and the referendum failed; then it would still be necessary to address the future safety of not only these buildings but also the public and the employees in these buildings. Mr. Gale stated that the City had an obligation to replace the buildings and would have the authority to do so under the financing option now being proposed.

Concern was expressed that holding a referendum could delay construction of the new facilities even longer and as a result, increase the danger to the public and City employees who work in and out of these buildings.

Concern was expressed however that even though the City had the authority to raise taxes to generate the needed revenue, that it may not be "the right thing to do", and even though there was support for the internal financing option, the public should be polled as to their acceptance of the proposal.

Questions were raised about the timing of construction and the availability of funds, and in response, advice was given that funding was now available to proceed with the design process in 2002. Further information was provided that the \$41 Million cost included renovation work on some existing buildings which was not detailed in the staff report.

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Discussion continued, during which the suggestion was made that a public consultation process, rather than a referendum, be initiated (as proposed in Item 4 following), as it was necessary to deal with the health and safety issues occurring in the existing fire halls sooner rather than later. However, concern was expressed about the propriety of proceeding with construction if the referendum was defeated. Reference was made to the proposed financing options, and staff reviewed with the Committee, the anticipated costs to Richmond householders. During the discussion, City Solicitor Paul Kendrick responded to questions from the Committee on possible courses of action to take if the referendum was defeated and whether the results of an opinion referendum question would be binding.

Discussion continued, during which Mr. Gale explained the proposed communication strategy process to the Committee. The comment was made during the discussion that the approval of a funding option was a business decision made by the City to correct health and safety issues which should have been addressed many years ago. In speaking further to the referendum, Mr. Gale advised that if a referendum was held, staff would take no further action until a decision was made about the physical construction of the facilities. He added that design work of the buildings could be implemented, based on the decision made by the Committee on the consultation process, and that the expectation was that construction could start towards the end of 2002.

Discussion then ensued on the issue of proceeding with a referendum at the same time as investing revenue into the design process in order to keep the project on-line. Also addressed were the issues of (i) the proposed tax increase and whether this increase was over and above any other increase which might be planned; (ii) how financing and revenue generation would occur through property taxation; and (iii) the City borrowing funds from itself through a revolving trust account and whether repayment included an appropriate rate of interest. Information was provided by the Chief Administrative Officer George Duncan during the discussion that adoption of the proposed 'Community Charter' could result in the elimination of referenda because the requirement was found to be a deterrent to sound businesses practices.

Discussion continued briefly on (i) the issue of proceeding to referendum, (ii) whether an opinion or formal referendum question should be pursued, and (iii) the work which would be required to complete the process.

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the funding method for the replacement of Community Safety Buildings be approved (as outlined in Option C of the report dated October 24th, 2001, from the General Manager, Community Safety).*
- (2) *That the following, Parts 1 and 4 of Resolution IC01/15-4 (adopted by Council Monday, July 23, 2001), be rescinded:*

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- “(1) That funding for the replacement of community fire hall facilities, at an estimated value of \$22 million (including land acquisition), be presented to the electorate as a referendum question at the 2002 civic election.*
- (2) That funding for the replacement of a new RCMP/Public Safety Building, at an estimated cost of \$27 million, be presented to the electorate as a referendum question at the 2005 civic election.”*

Prior to the question on the motion being called, staff were directed to report to Committee by the end of January, 2002 on financing strategies, and at that time:

- (a) provide a flow chart on (i) the actual cost of implementing a 1.5% increase to 2012, as opposed to borrowing to 2025; and (ii) the cost to the homeowner for each year's taxation; and
- (b) provide information from the past few years regarding revenue which the City had borrowed from itself and which had not yet been repaid.

Mr. Bruce also confirmed that staff would provide scenarios of various options to the Committee, based on 1% added in 2002, 1.5% in 2003, or 2% in 2004, from which the Committee would select a suitable funding strategy.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

It was moved and seconded

That staff prepare a set of sample referendum questions for presentation to the electorate in November, 2002, regarding the refurbishing, upgrading or replacement of existing community safety buildings .

The question on the motion was not called, as discussion ensued on the advisability of adopting such a recommendation at this time. Concern was expressed by several members of the Committee that the motion was premature until such time as a final decision on the funding strategy was made in January of 2002. Questions were also raised as to the rationale for proceeding to a referendum for an opinion of the public when it was intended to replace the buildings in any case. A further comment was made that a decision had been made to proceed with an internal financing option and therefore the motion now being considered was irrelevant.

Comments were also made that even though the fire halls required replacement, an opinion referendum could provide the opportunity to the public to come up with alternative solutions to the proposed tax increase. Mr. Bruce also advised that the next Five Year Financial Plan must be submitted to the public for its information following the completion of the 2002 budget, and that the financing option would be included in that process. He suggested that that information meeting could provide an opportunity to determine the public's reaction to the proposal.

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The question on the motion was then called, and it was **DEFEATED**.

OPPOSED: Cllr. Barnes
Greenhill
Sue Halsey-Brandt
Howard
Kumagai
McNulty
Steves

4. **REPLACEMENT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY BUILDINGS - COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

(Report: Nov. 28/01, File No.: 2025-02) (REDMS No. 580079)

It was moved and seconded

That the Communications Strategy for the Replacement of Community Safety Buildings be approved.

The question on the motion was not called, as discussion ensued on the proposed strategy and when the process to initiate a referendum would have to be initiated.

(Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt left the meeting at 6:00 p.m., and did not return.)

During the discussion, the importance of making the public aware of the current state of the community safety buildings and the problems being experienced, was reiterated by a number of Councillors. Information was also provided that as the strategy was prepared, reports would be submitted to Committee on its content.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

5. **A REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR THE RICHMOND TRADE AND EXHIBITION CENTRE**

(Report: Dec. 5/01, File No.: 0060-20-TRIC1) (REDMS No. 574411)

The General Manager, Urban Development, David McLellan, accompanied by Senior Planner Suzanne Carter, advised that they were available to answer any questions which the Committee might have.

Discussion then ensued among Committee members and staff on the feasibility of acquiring the DFO property for the proposed trade and exhibition centre, either through donation or other means, and on such issues as:

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- whether construction of the facility over two levels would decrease the amount of property required
- whether the trade and convention centre would be tied to the success of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games bid, and the timeline for construction of the facility
- the need for political intervention to ensure the success of the project
- the need to submit innovative proposals for acquisition of the property which could result in a partnership with the Federal Government
- the status of the native land claim.

(Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt left the meeting at 6:28 p.m., during the above discussion, and did not return.)

It was moved and seconded

That the report (dated December 5th, 2001, from the Manager, Policy Planning), regarding A Review Of Alternative Sites For The Richmond Trade And Exhibition Centre, be received for information.

CARRIED

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

6. **COMMUNITY CHARTER CONTENT (DISCUSSION PAPER)**

(Report: Nov. 7/01, File No.: 0035-02) (REDMS No. 558342)

It was moved and seconded

That the positions (contained in the report dated November 7th, 2001, from the Chief Administrative Officer) regarding the Community Charter be forwarded to the Minister of State for Community Charter and to the Community Charter Council, and that the Chief Administrative Officer be instructed to forward these positions to the Minister immediately.

Prior to the question being called, a brief discussion ensued during which the importance of dissolving the Community Charter Council after adoption of the Charter was stressed. Concern was also expressed about the proposed tax exemptions.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting adjourn (6:35 p.m.).

CARRIED

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Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Monday, December 17th, 2001.

Mayor Malcolm Brodie
Chair

Fran J. Ashton
Executive Assistant

His Worship Mayor Malcolm Brodie and Councillors

My name is Louise Hudson and I am a committee member of the RCSAC.

The Richmond Community Social Services Council wishes to speak on the issue of a new Intercultural Committee for Richmond. For the past year, we have been discussing how the cultural diversity in our community impacts our work and the community in general. In our action plan for 2002, we had decided to make intercultural issues one of our key action items. How we reconcile different values and perspective is a key concern of our member agencies who often work with at risk populations or provide services to those that are marginalized. It has already impacted the discussion on the location of group homes, will impact the recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force on Drugs and Crime and the recommendations of the Homelessness Committee just beginning its work. Providing appropriate services to clients with diverse cultures and who do not speak English is another concern of agencies. Most agencies including the Health Board, and the Ministry of Children and Families Development have their own intercultural committee.

Many in our community are already taking leadership in fostering harmony among people from different cultures. The leadership shown by the RCMP post September 11 is one of many examples. Many individuals in our community have initiated activities, events and personal relationships to ensure that everyone in our community feels at home and welcome. Others like the Richmond Chinese Community Services Society have been very proactive in ensuring that the voice of the Chinese community is heard in community organizations.

We believe that it is important that the City participates in taking leadership on these issues. At the same time, we realize that there needs to be the participation of those in the community who are not affiliated with an agency, or choose not to be appointed by Council - through the normal process of City Appointments. Furthermore any new intercultural committee in our community should be free to address a variety of issues which may or may not be the mandate of the City or referred by Council.

We therefore would like to propose that the RCSAC be consulted by City Staff as they bring back to council a recommendation for an intercultural committee and that this committee would both support current local initiatives and ensure participation from a broad diversity of individuals and agencies.

Thank you,