

Staff Report

Origin

On November 13, 2007, Council approved a Friendship City Relationship with one of four cities in China (Xiamen, Yangzhou, Yantai and Qingdao). Staff were also directed, with consideration of advice from the Sister City Committee following the facilitated Planning and Budgeting Workshop, to provide Council with a recommendation on the process and criteria for evaluation of the identified candidate Friendship City and a process for formalizing selection of one Sister City Relationship in China by the end of the first 3 year program term.

Council also instructed, "That for the city selected through the above process, an invitation be sent to the proposed friendship city and if a positive response is received, that a formal agreement (accompanied by a three year Activity Plan) be developed as specified in the program policies and procedures."

Analysis

Over the last five years, Staff and the Sister Cities Committee developed processes and criteria for narrowing the selection of a city from an initial eighteen cities to four. Following on from Council's direction above, Staff and the Committee utilized the renewed Committee objectives and new policies and procedures to further rank the four cities. The ranking looked at criteria such as the benefits, similarities, historical connection, common values and common interests to or with Richmond.

This ranking was then extensively discussed at the Sister City Committee meeting held on January 9, 2008, in context with direct experience gained via Richmond's delegation visit to China in July 2007. Following this discussion, the following Motion was passed unanimously.

The Sister City Committee recommends that the City of Richmond enter into a formal, friendly, co-operative relationship with Xiamen, Fujian Province, China.

Staff concur with this recommendation. It was agreed that with the approval of Council, that an invitation letter be sent to Xiamen with respect to developing a relationship and if a positive response is received, that an agreement accompanied by an activity plan be developed.

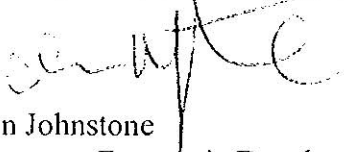
Subsequently, an invitation was received from Qingdao (See Attachment A) and it would make economic sense to tie the two visits together. At this time, it appears that mid April may be optimal to visit China but this would be subject to confirmation from Xiamen and Qingdao.

Financial Impact

Total funding required for this trip is \$33,000. In 2007, Council approved up to \$28,400 from Council Contingency towards the trip. Up to \$20,000 was for a delegation from the Richmond Sister City Committee and Richmond City Council and \$8,400 for a staff representative. The additional funding required of \$4,600 would come from the Sister Cities 2008 Program Fund.

Conclusion

That an invitation be sent to Xiamen to enter into a formal, friendly, co-operative relationship and if a positive response is received, that a formal agreement (accompanied by a three year Activity Plan) be developed as specified in the program policies and procedures.



Iain Johnstone
Manager, Economic Development
(4934)

(Translated version)

15 January 2008

Mr. Malcolm Brodie
Mayor of Richmond
Canada

Dear Mayor Brodie,

Thank you for your letter dated December 14th, inviting me and Qingdao to develop a formal friendly cooperative relations agreement with Richmond, Canada.

Richmond and Qingdao, both as the Olympic cities at the Pacific Rim, embrace lots of cooperation opportunities in the fields of Olympics, tourism, sports, and education etc. I believe that, our exchanges and collaboration will not only help deepen our peoples' mutual understanding and friendship, but strengthen the existing strategic partnership between Canada and China.

Taking this opportunity, I hereby sincerely invite you to lead a Richmond delegation to visit Qingdao in March this year and sign the friendly cooperative relations agreement. I am willing to work with you to jointly promote friendly exchanges and collaboration for the well-being of our citizens.

Xia Geng
Mayor of Qingdao
P.R.China

