



Council/School Board Liaison Committee

Date: January 13th, 2004

Place: M.2004
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Derek Dang
School Trustee Annie McKittrick

Absent: School Trustee Patricia Whittaker

Also Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie
Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Rob Howard
Councillor Kiichi Kumagai
Councillor Bill McNulty
Councillor Harold Steves
School Trustee Linda McPhail
School Trustee Andy Hobbs
Bruce Beairsto, Superintendent of Schools, School District No. 38
(Richmond)
K. L. Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, School District No. 38 (Richmond)
Catherine Volkering Carlile, General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Cultural
Services
D. Semple, Director, Parks Operations
K. Sparrow, Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
Fran J. Ashton, Executive Assistant, City Clerk's Office

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Chair, Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt turn the meeting over to the facilitator, the Director, Corporate & Intergovernmental Relations, Lani Schultz.

Ms. Schultz then reviewed the Objectives of the meeting, which were:

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- (1) Dialogue around what a good working relationship between the City and the School Board should look like.
- (2) Create a better understanding around what our common issues are.
- (3) Identify priority areas for further discussion.
- (4) Identify next steps.

Also reviewed by Ms. Schultz were the Process/Agenda for the meeting:

- (1) Introduction and Process
- (2) Context
- (3) Describing a successful relationship between the City and the School Board.
- (4) Shared Challenges and Opportunities.
- (5) Prioritizing focus areas for collaboration, for further discussion.
- (6) Identifying next steps.

Reviewed also were the grounds rules for the meeting.

The meeting then focused on the first objective, *“Dialogue around what a good working relationship between the City and the School Board should look like”*, and the following suggestions were made:

- good communication – both at the staff and political levels
- trust and respect
- joint projects
- consensus in goals
- informal
- consistent communication across the board
- ‘win-win’
- frequent communication
- shared vision of the community and its needs
- mutual appreciation and promotion of each other’s views
- sharing ‘heads up’ on emerging issues
- shared resources when appropriate (can be people expertise, facilities, funds, etc.)
- joint planning around common issues – e.g. street racing
- healthy appreciation of when your views are divergent.

At this point in the meeting, a brief discussion ensued between the Mayor, Ms. Schultz and staff on how the agenda being proposed related to the review of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Parks Master Plan. Advice was given that the exercise would set the framework to help focus on how the City and the School District could work together. Further advice was given that staff would have to determine how the comments made fit within the Plan.

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Discussion then continued, with questions being raised about the existence of a policy which set the amount of acreage to be provide for school/park purposes at local elementary and high schools. Information was provided by Mr. Morris as to the number of hectares to be provided by the School District and the City. Discussion then ensued on the increasing difficulty in acquiring the necessary property as specified in the policy, and the suggestion was made that perhaps the City's policy should be reviewed.

Reference was made to the proposed Parks Master Plan, and information was provided on when the process began; the purpose of the Plan; the appointment of a Community Working Group to provide recommendations on the Master Plan and how services should be delivered; the phases of the process; and on what the Community Working Group would be commenting.

Issues, Challenges and Opportunities (Objectives 2 and 3) were then addressed.

Discussion continued on the policy which set the amount of acreage to provided for new school sites, and questions were raised about the amount of acreage which would be required if Rideau Elementary School was closed. Information was provided by Mr. Morris on the Rideau and Garrett School properties and the result if the properties were sold. Reference was made to the Park Master Plan, and advice was given that staff were reviewing this issue within the context of that plan.

Reference was made to the community schools, and the opinion was expressed that these facilities were not being utilized to their potential. The comment was made that perhaps instead of developing soccer fields, consideration should be given to constructing a multi-purpose building with basketball courts. The comment was also made that communication between the School Board and the City needed to be improved with respect to the joint use of school and community facilities.

The suggestion was made that the City and the School Board should also be sharing 'softer' issues, such as education, and expanding these issues into the development of joint strategies for common issues. Discussion continued, with the comment being made that a joint definition should be prepared for "community schools" as the City and the School Board might have different philosophies and that there was not necessarily a common understanding of the scope of each other's mandates. Also discussed was:

- the feasibility of schools being open year round, and the impact which this could have on services currently provided through community centres, such as before and after school care which was not normally provided during the months of July and August
- the initiatives being proposed by the School District and discussion ensued on how information could be shared between the City and the School Board

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- the need to develop a common joint strategy to create a broader youth strategy for the community as inactivity and lifestyle issues affect both the School Board's and City's goals
- literacy and the role of the City and the School Board in dealing with this issue
- the conclusions of the proposed Park Master Plan review and the impact which recommendations could have on the City budget as there is only a certain amount of funding available, and how the best interests of the community could be kept in mind
- the use of volunteers and the connection between City and School District activities
- the concerns of the City and the School Board about the changes being implemented by senior levels of government and how the City and the School Board jointly responded to these changes
- the definition of 'recreation'; whether this overlapped with the mandates of the City and the School Board, and how the City and School Board ensured that rather than duplication, there was cooperation
- the need for succession planning to ensure that what had occurred between the City and the School Board was not lost as this could affect the good working relationship which now existed between the two agencies
- the need to determine the core services which should be provided by the City and the School Board
- the erosion of the City park infrastructure; replacement and upgrades could soon become an issue
- the limitations of the City and the School Board regarding revenue availability and the need to find new opportunities for revenue generation; the possibility of the City and the School Board working together to find a better revenue stream, such as through marketing
- the need to strengthen neighbourhoods and to facilitate 'connections'; and whether there was a system which could capitalize on connecting joint City and School Board groups; whether the City and School Board wanted to consider neighbourhood planning groups which had a broad scope and then strengthen connections between disciplines; the contributions of Parent Advisory Committees
- safety issues which could be addressed jointly
- legacy projects relating to the 2010 Olympic Winter Games; and anticipated rising construction costs due to the demand of trades for Olympic construction projects.

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(Supt. Bruce Beirsto left the meeting at 7:05 p.m., during the above discussion and did not return.)

Concern was expressed that many of the topics addressed at this meeting had no relation to the Parks Master Plan, and discussion ensued on how to address this concern. As a result of the discussion, the following 'next steps' were created:

- staff to organize the comments into categories, and then staff from the City and the School Board would add their comments
- the material would be forwarded to the Council/School Board Liaison Committee to determine what fell within the Master Plan process and how to deal with those matters which did not
- return comments to Council
- ensure that the remaining School Trustees receive information
- develop joint goals in those areas where the City and the School Board choose to focus.

(Councillors Kumagai and McNulty left the meeting at 7:07 p.m., during the above discussion, and did not return.)

Discussion continued briefly, during which the suggestion was made that the City needed more involvement from the School Board on these issues.

In concluding the meeting, the Chair thanked Ms. Schultz for her presentation. She added that some of the issues raised this evening would be discussed at the next meeting of the Council/School Board Liaison Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting adjourn (7:15 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Council/School Board Liaison Committee held on Tuesday, January 13th, 2004.

Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Chair

Fran J. Ashton
Executive Assistant, City Clerk's Office