To:	Planning Committee	**Date:**	January 24, 2007
From:	David Weber Director, City Clerk's Office	**File:**	01-0155-02/2007-Vol 01
Re:	Options for Enhanced Communication Between City Council and the School Board		

Staff Recommendation

1. That opportunities for enhanced communication and more informed dialogue between City Council and the School Board be pursued through an augmented Council / School Board Liaison Committee; and

2. That the School Board be invited to participate in a review of the Council School Board Liaison Committee Terms of Reference and operating procedures with a view to augmenting its role in the decision-making process.

David Weber
Director, City Clerk's Office
(4098)

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<tr><td>ROUTED TO:</td><td>CONCURRENCE</td><td colspan="2">CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</td></tr>
<tr><td>GM, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (Staff Liaison to Council / School Board Liaison Committee)
....</td><td>Y ☑ N ☐</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>REVIEWED BY TAG</td><td>YES ☑ NO ☐</td><td>REVIEWED BY CAO</td><td>YES ☑ NO ☐</td></tr>
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Staff Report

Origin

At the January 16, 2007 Planning Committee meeting, the following referral motion was adopted:

> 1. *That at the February 6, 2007 Planning Committee meeting, staff provide options on how to enhance communication, and how to create more informed dialogue, between City Council and the School Board; and*
>
> 2. *That as one of the options, staff advise as to whether the City could invite the School Board to identify a Trustee to sit on the City's Planning Committee.*

This report will outline options for City Council and School Board interaction at the political level. Options for City Council – School Board coordination specifically with regard to the City Centre Area Plan and OCP development will be addressed separately by Planning Department staff in the context of the City Centre Area Plan report.

Findings Of Fact

At the January 16, 2007 Planning Committee meeting, discussion took place as to the possibility of having a School Board Trustee serve as a member of the City's Planning Committee. Mention was made of the fact that, in the past, such an arrangement had been established. A search through minutes at the City of Richmond Archives confirms that a School Trustee served as a full voting member of the City's Planning Committee from 1971 to the end of 1985. The minutes show that the appointed School Trustee attended meetings only occasionally, on average only once or twice a year. In 1986, in conjunction with a broader City re-organization, the Planning Committee was re-constituted as the Planning and Development Services Committee and from that point forward, the Committee no longer included a School Trustee as a member.

With regard to the City's Parks and Recreation Commission, two School Trustees originally served as full voting members from 1964 to 1983. In 1983, the Commission was re-structured and the number of School Trustees on the Commission was reduced to one. In 1995, the City repealed the Parks and Recreation Commission Establishment Bylaw and in its place, two standing committees of Council were established which continued the mandate of the former Parks and Recreation Commission. The two standing committees were the Transportation, Parks and Environment Committee and the Community Services Committee. Although there appeared at the time to be some concern over the reduced opportunity for School Board input into City parks and recreation matters following the repeal of the Parks and Recreation Commission Establishment Bylaw, the conclusion was reached that the mandate of the Council / School Board Liaison Committee was sufficiently broad to address the range of issues of mutual concern to City Council and the School Board. Since that time, there have been no appointments to any council standing committees that were not sitting council members.

Today, under section 141 of the Community Charter, a mayor may appoint people to council standing committees who are not elected council members, provided that at least half of the members on a given standing committee are council members. It is significant to note that by statute, a mayor is given broad authority with regard to the establishment, mandate and the appointment of members to standing committees. To answer the referral question as to *whether the City could invite the School Board to identify a Trustee to sit on the City's Planning Committee*, the answer is *yes* - if such an invitation was extended by a mayor, in whose sole

discretion appointments to standing committees are made. A mayor's authority with regard to standing committees would also allow him or her to determine the mechanism for choosing candidates from the given organization, for example, whether a School Board would be asked to nominate one or more specific individuals for possible appointment or whether the choice of committee member(s) would be made by a mayor without a formal nomination process.

A person who is duly appointed to a standing committee under section 141 of the Community Charter would typically be a full and equal member of that standing committee with the right to vote on any question before the Committee. It would be possible, however, for a mayor to also appoint ex-officio non-voting members to a standing committee if at the time of appointment, various conditions were attached to the appointment.

Analysis

The following options are provided to address the issue of strengthening Council - School Board communication at the political level:

Option 1   Appoint a School Trustee to Planning Committee as a <u>full voting member</u> (NOT RECOMMENDED)

- Permitted now under governing legislation (Community Charter)
- Mayor must appoint a specific individual and would have discretion to choose which School Trustee would serve on the Planning Committee
- Opportunity for on-going School Board input on all issues coming before Planning Committee, but would not provide the same opportunity with regard to matters coming before other standing committees, such as the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee or the General Purposes Committee
- Input might be considered "one-way," in that this model would enhance School Board input on City agenda items but does not provide for Council input on School Board agenda items
- There is a potential impact on the City's legislative process if non-council members directly influence the outcome of voting at the Committee level. Simply speaking, council members are elected to make decisions on matters within a municipality's legal jurisdiction, and from a certain perspective, it would be reasonable to say that in order to remain accountable to the electorate, the responsibility for those decisions should rest solely with those that are elected to that office. For this reason, the option of appointing a *voting* member to Planning Committee who is not an elected council member would not be recommended.

Option 2   Appoint a Trustee to Planning Committee as a <u>non-voting member</u>

- As above, such an arrangement would provide opportunity for on-going School Board input on all issues coming before Planning Committee, but would not provide the same opportunity with regard to matters coming before other standing committees, such as the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee or the General Purposes
- Again, input might be considered "one-way," in that this model would enhance School Board input on City agenda items but does not provide for Council input on School Board agenda items
- Mayor would appoint a Trustee as an *ex-officio, non-voting member* of the Committee, stipulating in any terms of reference for the appointment that the member could not move motions, vote on questions, be counted for the purposes of establishing quorum, nor participate in closed sessions of Committee unless Committee were to endorse a resolution to allow them to stay.

**Option 3   Augment the Council / School Board Liaison Committee
(RECOMMENDED)**

- Review and restructure the CSBL Committee to facilitate improved communication between the two organizations.
- CSBL Mandate / Terms of Reference could be revised to place greater focus on long-term strategic issues of mutual interest and concern
- The number of elected officials could be increased (perhaps increased from 2 to 3 from each organization)
- CSBL could receive referrals from Council and Committee or from the School Board on specific matters that would benefit from partner input with a view to having CSBL provide recommendations directly to Council and to the School Board on those issues
- CSBL could call additional meetings as required in order to address any matters that have been specifically referred to CSBL for consideration (this would be in addition to the currently scheduled CSBL meetings)
- Input would not be restricted to *planning* matters - CSBL could consider any topic of mutual interest or concern and could receive referrals from other Council Committees
- Input would be "two-way," in that an augmented CSBL would afford an opportunity for *each* partner to provide input on Council initiatives and School Board initiatives

Option 4   Establish a Joint Ad Hoc Task Force to Consider Specific Issues (such as the CCAP)

- A separate joint ad hoc task force could be established by City Council and the School Board to study and make recommendations on significant issues such as the City Centre Area Plan
- A task force could be established to investigate any issue of mutual concern, which would provide an opportunity for input and communication on a broad range of matters, and would not be restricted to matters coming through only one council committee such as the Planning Committee
- A task force, made-up of City Council members and School Board Trustees, could meet as often as necessary to complete the mandate that is established
- A joint task force would consider an issue in detail and report its findings and recommendations to both City Council and to the School Board
- At the conclusion of the process, the task force would be disbanded
- This model could be used again in future to consider significant strategic issues of mutual concern to City Council and the School Board

Having reviewed and considered the above options, the staff consensus is that the most effective and most promising model is Option 3 - working to revise and augment the role of the Council / School Board Liaison Committee. The following points were key to reaching consensus on option 3:

- Provides the opportunity for communication and consultation on a broader range of issues (as opposed to *planning* matters exclusively)
- Provides the means for "two-way" communication between the partners – *each* partner would have the opportunity to provide input on the other's initiatives (as opposed to only providing the means for the School Board to provide input on Council's agenda items)
- Does not establish an anomaly in the City's governance model
- Does not set a precedent, nor create pressure for further expansions of Committee membership beyond the established form

- Focuses the efforts of elected officials on specific matters of mutual interest and concern (as opposed to casting a broad net over items that wouldn't necessarily be of interest to partners)
- provides opportunity to re-vitalize CSBL Committee and to augment its role in the decision-making process

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Of the four options described in this report, Option 3 provides the most promise for improving Council / School Board communication in a manner that suggests the coming together of two equal partners. This option also allows maximum flexibility in terms of identifying the most salient issues to focus upon and does not restrict communication to matters appearing on the City's Planning Committee agenda.

Staff therefore recommend that the School Board be invited to participate in a process to review the terms of reference and the operating practices of the Council / School Board Liaison Committee, the goal of which would be to augment and enhance the role of the CSBL Committee in the decision-making process.

David Weber
Director, City Clerk's Office
(4098)