



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COUNCIL

TO: Richmond City Council
FROM: Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Community Services Committee
DATE: May 4th, 2000
FILE: 4055-01
RE: NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Community Services Committee, at its meeting held on Wednesday, April 26th, 2000, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That the Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services 'Neighbourhood Development Initiative', be forwarded to Council for information.

Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Community Services Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended the following:

That the Community Services Committee endorse the Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services neighbourhood development initiative.

STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

In order to help achieve the City's vision of being the most appealing, livable and well managed city in Canada, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services has undertaken a major initiative in neighbourhood development. Neighbourhoods are the building blocks of our community. Safe, healthy, vibrant neighbourhoods create a safe, healthy, vibrant city. One project of this initiative is the development of a Block Party Kit to encourage residents to interact with their neighbours.

ANALYSIS

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services identified neighbourhood development as a significant factor in enhancing livability in Richmond. Neighbourhoods in which residents know each other are safer, often more appealing and respond effectively to social problems. Residents of healthy neighbourhoods have a strong sense of belonging to the community, and are more tolerant of social and cultural differences.

A Neighbourhood Development Strategy was developed which identifies the department as taking a proactive role in facilitating, co-ordinating and encouraging neighbourhood building activities. The major focus of the strategy is to encourage and facilitate residents to take the initiative to interact with their neighbours.

Staff have made presentations to most Community Associations which have resulted in the Associations beginning to plan neighbourhood activities. Staff will meet with the remaining Associations to explain the Neighbourhood Development Strategy. Centre staff will be promoting the Block Party Kit to the local school Parent Advisory Committees, Strata Councils and other community organizations. These organizations are being encouraged to initiate neighbourhood projects from May until September 2000.

Another phase of the initiative is to actively encourage neighbourhoods to organize Block Parties. To this end, A Block Party Kit has been developed and will be launched May 6, 2000 as part of the "Community Transformations" museum display. The Kits will be available at all community centres and Minoru Place Seniors Centre. The community centre staff will help residents plan the Block Parties and assist them with the application for a public event permit. This process will result in staff developing personal relationships with residents and creating the opportunity to encourage residents to undertake other neighbourhood activities. An added benefit is that some local residents around the community centres will participate in centre programs and could become active members of the Community Association. The Associations would then be more representative of the community they serve.

The Block Party program is the initial stage of the Neighbourhood Development Strategy, Currently, the staff are working with the traffic staff to develop Program Guidelines for Block Parties, which will be revised as issues arise over the summer pilot period. Once they are finalized, the Program Guidelines will be forwarded to Committee and Council.

The Neighbourhood Development Strategy involves working with other departments and agencies to encourage and facilitate neighbourhood-building activities. There are many

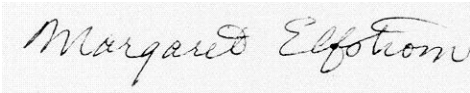
possibilities and potential linkages with traffic, crime prevention, fire service and health that are currently being investigated which would enhance neighbourhood development and address livability issues.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None.

CONCLUSION

Richmond's neighbourhoods have changed considerably in appearance and cultural make-up over the past ten years. These changes have impacted the cohesiveness of some neighbourhoods with residents not knowing who their neighbours are. This can lead to an unsafe, unfriendly environment, which could impact the health of the community as a whole. The neighbourhood development initiative has been developed to encourage residents to get to know their neighbours, which will enhance the health of the neighbourhood and the City.



Margaret Elfstrom
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