



To: Richmond City Council
From: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair
General Purposes Committee
Date: May 8, 2007
File: 01-0100-20-SCIT1-
01/2007-Vol 01
Re: **SISTER CITY VISITS TO CHINA AND PIERREFONDS**

The General Purposes Committee, at its meeting held on Monday, May 7, 2007, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

Committee Recommendation

- (1) That Councillor Bill McNulty be appointed to attend the investigative trip;*
- (2) That a staff representative be approved to accompany the Sister City delegation on the investigative trip to China at a cost up to \$11,150 with funds to come from Council Contingency;*
- (3) That a staff representative be approved to accompany the Sister City delegation on the November trip to China at a cost up to \$8,400 with funds to come from Council Contingency;*
- (4) That Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Councillor Linda Barnes and Councillor Cynthia Chen be authorized to participate in the November trip to China; and*
- (5) That staff comment on the apportionment of sponsorship and other funds for the various trips.*

Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair
General Purposes Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended the following:

- (1) That Council approve a staff representative accompany the Sister City delegation to Pierrefonds for the 40th anniversary celebration at a cost up to \$1,600 with funds to come from Council Contingency;*
- (2) That Council appoint a Council representative to attend the investigative trip, with funds to come from the Sister City sponsorship money;*

- (3) *That Council approve a staff representative accompany the Sister City delegation on the investigative trip to China at a cost up to \$11,150 with funds to come from Council Contingency;*
- (4) *That Council approve a staff representative accompany the Sister City delegation on the November trip to China at a cost up to \$8,400 with funds to come from Council Contingency.*

Staff Report

Origin

On Monday, April 2, 2007 the Sister City Committee attended the General Purposes Committee meeting to request approval for:

1. A trip to China in spring of 2007 to investigate a friendship city in China to be followed by a report with recommendations for friendship cities for Council consideration;
2. A representative from Council and two Richmond Sister City Committee members to visit Pierrefonds to celebrate their 40th anniversary as a Sister City;
3. A visit to China in November 2007 to confirm a friendship city(s); and
4. A delegation of Richmond Sister City Committee members to visit Wakayama, Japan in preparation for an exchange visit in 2008

During the General Purposes meeting information was also provided by staff confirming that if these official trips were approved, a city staff member would be required to accompany the delegation to provide support and assist in any analysis and research for future reports to Council.

This report addresses the costs associated with a staff member's attendance on the initiatives as outlined in the Sister City report dated April 2, 2007.

Analysis

Council appoints the Sister City Committee on an annual basis. The Sister City Committee initiatives for 2007, as approved by Council on Tuesday April 10, 2007, include a number of visits to maintain the positive relationships with our Sister Cities and to investigate the possibility of acquiring a third Sister City in China.

The first trip would be an exploratory trip to seven cities in China by a City of Richmond delegation to investigate cities that are the best fit and may be suitable friendship cities. In the report to Council the Sister City Committee suggested a ten day trip but have realized the extent of the task and have extended the visit to be fourteen days.

Arrangements are being made for July 1 to July 14, 2007.

Following the first trip, a staff report will be provided to Council recommending a suggested friendship city or cities in China. These Sister City trips will require representation from City staff to ensure Richmond's interests; protocols and requirements are taken into consideration. It would also be prudent to have a Councillor appointed to work with the committee on the investigative trip. The funding for the Councillor could come from the Sister City sponsorship money.

The second Sister City delegation, which has been approved by Council, will be in late 2007. This trip would be approximately 7 days and will be more official in nature and require the presence of the Mayor and/or Councillor(s) to sign an official memorandum of understanding with the friendship city. The presence of a staff member on an official visit sets the proper protocol and tone that is expected by Asian cities.

On April 10, 2007 Council also approved the visit to Pierrefonds, Quebec to honour our 40th Anniversary with Pierrefonds. Council approved one Councillor and two committee members to attend the celebrations. It has been common practice to have a staff person attend on official visits to assist the delegation throughout the visit.

Financial Impact

Investigative trip to China

Airfare (Includes Japan)	\$ 6,500
Accommodation	\$ 2,100
Per Diem	\$ 1,150
Transportation (inter city flights)& ground	<u>\$ 1,400</u>
Total	\$11,150

Visit Two (Pierrefonds) 3 days

Airfare	\$ 800
Accommodation	\$ 500
Per Diem	\$ 225
Incidentals (transportation)	<u>\$ 75</u>
Total	\$ 1,600

Visit Three (China) 7 days

Airfare	\$ 5,500
Accommodation	\$ 1,050
Per Diem	\$ 850
Transportation	<u>\$ 1000</u>
Total	\$ 8,400

Grand Total **\$21,150**

The Sister City Committee has an annual operating budget of \$8,500 that is utilized for various meetings, small gifts and incidentals throughout the year. It is anticipated that this funding will be exhausted by the end of 2007. Funding for the above amounts is available in the Council contingency account. The staff costs follow the City of Richmond's expense reimbursement procedure adopted by Council in 2005.

If there is an opportunity for sponsorship or lower rates due to group travel, these will be applied to these costs. The request is that Council adopt funding "up to" \$21,150 to ensure all related costs are covered.

Conclusion

When a Council appointed committee such as the Sister City Committee visits other cities on official visits, it is important to have a City of Richmond representative(s) and a Councillor accompany the delegation to ensure Richmond's perspectives and interests are kept in the forefront. As well, having a City representative as part of the delegation is considered proper protocol for Asian cities.



Anne Stevens
Manager, Community Recreation Services