



To: Richmond City Council
From: Councillor Linda Barnes, Chair
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee
Re: **SMOKE FREE ZONES**

Date: April 25, 2007
File: 11-7200-01/2007-Vol
01

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee Committee, at its meeting held on Tuesday, April 24, 2007, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

Committee Recommendation

- (1) That smoke free zones be promoted at the entrances of all City owned municipal buildings including but not limited to City Hall, indoor sport venues, community centres, cultural facilities, libraries and museums;*
- (2) That smoke free zones be promoted at the main entrance gates and all areas where the public gather to watch or participate in outdoor events (such as behind backstops, the sidelines of sports fields and spectator seating areas) at all City owned playing fields and children's playgrounds;*
- (3) That all affiliated community organizations be informed that a condition of use of City facilities will include their cooperation in promoting and monitoring this program; and,*
- (4) That a letter be forwarded to the Richmond School District #38 to inform them of these resolutions.*
- (5) That a letter be forwarded to the Provincial Government encouraging that it bring forward its amended Tobacco Control Act as soon as possible.*

Councillor Linda Barnes, Chair
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that the Committee added Part 5 above.

Staff Report

Origin

At the regular meeting of Richmond City Council on October 23, 2006, the following resolution was adopted:

- (1) *“That staff bring forward a report which discusses options relating to smoke-free zones at all sports venues including and not limited to swimming pools, community centres and arena entrances, sports fields, artificial turf fields and children’s playgrounds”.*
- (2) *“That staff examine the feasibility of banning smoking at other public locations including bus stops, and report to the Community Safety Committee accordingly.”*

This report is in response to above referral # (1) above.

Referral # (2) above is lead by Community Bylaws, in concert with Richmond Health Services. A report on regulatory procedures and a proposal to host a Smoke-Free Olympics in 2010 will be brought forward to Council at a later date.

Current Reality

Public Health Protection Bylaw No. 6989 restricts the use of tobacco products inside Richmond’s municipal facilities. Currently there are no City regulations restricting smoking at the entrances to City owned municipal buildings, outdoor playing fields or playgrounds in Richmond.

On March 06, 2007, the Ministry of Health for the Province of BC announced that the Tobacco Control Act is being amended to ban smoking at all indoor public places by 2008, in schools and on school grounds by September 2007 and in public doorways, near public doors, windows and air intakes to protect indoor air quality.

The Provincial Government has yet to announce awareness and enforcement strategies for these bans. The legislation for these amendments has yet to be passed. However, once the legislation is passed, it is quite likely that Provincial funding will be available for awareness and enforcement of these bans.

School District 38 has in place a policy that prohibits smoking on Board owned and leased property and in Board vehicles and therefore already meets the proposed amendments to the provincial Tobacco Control Act. SD 38 Policy 402.11 reads:

“It is the Board's duty to take reasonable measures to ensure the safety and health of employees and students while they are on Board-owned and leased property and in Board vehicles, and to safeguard the Board's property from fire hazards. For these reasons, the Board prohibits anyone from smoking on Board-owned and leased property and in Board vehicles”.

Richmond Health Services (RHS), part of Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, is currently working with the Community Bylaws staff, the City of Vancouver and other GVRD municipalities to develop a regional approach to the regulation of smoking in public areas. They may also include a regional approach to hosting a smoke-free Olympics in 2010.

The group is awaiting amendments to the provincial Tobacco Control Act that covers smoking at entrances to public buildings and expected to be implemented in the Fall of this year. Once these amendments are in effect, Richmond Health Services is planning to bring forward a report to Council requesting changes to the Public Health Protection Bylaw No. 6989 to prohibit smoking in specific outdoor public areas in Richmond.

Analysis

Public Health Protection Bylaw No. 6989 restricts the use of tobacco products inside a number of buildings in Richmond, including municipal facilities.

Complaints have been received regarding exposure to second hand smoke at entrances to municipal buildings and have also been received from coaches, parents and spectators concerned about young athletes and other park visitors being exposed to second hand smoke in outdoor settings such as playing fields and playgrounds.

An Ipsos Reid survey of Vancouver residents conducted for Vancouver Coastal Health in 2004 indicated that 70% of Vancouverites would support a buffer zone in front of office and public buildings.

Staff have researched various options for dealing with these concerns in City owned municipal buildings, outdoor playing fields or playgrounds in Richmond. The options are as follows:

Option #1 – Act Now By Establishing and Promoting Smoke Free Zones

This option is promotional and awareness based. The City would take action now to discourage tobacco users from smoking in specific public areas within a 10 metre radius of the entrances of all City owned municipal buildings (including but not limited to City Hall), indoor sport venues, community centres, cultural facilities, libraries and museums.

It would also include all areas where the public gather to watch or participate in outdoor events at all City owned playing fields and children's playgrounds (e.g. behind backstops, sidelines of sports fields and spectator seating areas).

This is the preferred option because it can be implemented very quickly without having to wait for Provincial legislation. It moves smokers away from entrances to municipal buildings, outdoor playing fields and playgrounds.

By taking action now, Richmond would be the first municipality in the Vancouver Coastal Health Region to establish smoke free zones at entrances to municipal buildings, outdoor playing fields and playgrounds.

This promotional approach has been successfully introduced at other municipalities outside of the Vancouver Coastal Health region (Kamloops, Delta, Vernon and Salmon Arm). It is a campaign that increases awareness, is self-monitoring, and less costly to implement, administer and enforce than a City Bylaw.

Municipalities contacted about their smoke free zones have indicated that they chose to endorse a smoke free zone policy rather than a City Bylaw to avoid the high costs associated with enforcement of a Bylaw at multiple facilities that are typically heavily used on weekends and evenings.

Municipalities that have established smoke free zones have indicated that the smoke free zones are self-policing. Benefits of smoke free zones are:

- Smoke free zones will reduce health risks associated with second hand smoke to our municipal building patrons and staff.
- Smoke free zones will protect our athletes from exposure to second hand smoke and negative lifestyle role models.
- Smoke free zones will protect spectators and park visitors from involuntary exposure to second hand smoke as well as provide a smoke free environment to enjoy events or watch children at play.
- Designating smoke free zones in advance of the Provincial legislation would clearly demonstrate Council's willingness to protect community residents and visitors from the harmful effects of second hand smoke.

Option #2 – Wait For the Provincial Legislation

In this option, the City will continue to allow smoking at all City owned outdoor spaces, including building entrances, playing fields and playgrounds; and make amendments to Public Health Protection Bylaw No. 6989 to cover these outdoor public spaces once the proposed amendments to the Tobacco Sales Act have been finalized by the Province.

The pitfall of this option is that the Provincial legislation may not get passed or could be delayed far into the future. Also, the proposed Provincial legislation is not expected to address smoking on municipal parks, playing fields or playgrounds.

Option #3 – Amend Bylaw 6989 To Include Outdoor Public Areas

In this option, the Public Health Protection Bylaw No. 6989 would be amended to include prohibiting smoking in specific outdoor public areas such as the entrances to City owned buildings, playing fields and playgrounds. This is part of a long term City Health Protection Bylaw program that is currently being worked on by Community Bylaws staff in conjunction with Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond Health Services, the City of Vancouver and other GVRD municipalities.

This program will be a regional approach to the regulation of smoking in public areas and may also include the objective of hosting a smoke-free Olympics in 2010.

Establishing a Bylaw that covers a wider scope of outdoor public areas in Richmond will take considerably more time to research, implement and will require more enforcement than the implementation of smoke free zones. If a bylaw is established, increased enforcement will be anticipated. Staff are working on this program and will be bringing forward a report in the future.

Implementation of Option #1

The public will be notified about the smoke free zones through a number of methods. Press releases, information of the City's web site, letters to our community organizations, and signage will be a part of the City 's Smoke Free Campaign.

Signs that discourage people from smoking would be installed at the entrances to municipal buildings and at areas where spectators gather to view events held at playing fields and at playgrounds. Sample signs are attached (Attachment 1 and 2).

As a condition of use, all community groups using municipal buildings or facilities will be expected to act in accordance with the policy and participate in promoting this new approach. User agreements will have a statement outlining the smoke free campaign and solicit the expectation that they notify their participants and spectators of the program.

Staff are also recommending that the School District #38 be informed of this action.

Richmond Sports Groups Support Smoke Free Zones At The City's Sport Venues

At their meeting of April 10, 2007, Richmond Sport Council endorsed the establishment of smoke free zones at the entrances to municipal sports venues, main entrance gates and all areas where the public gathers to watch or participate in outdoor events at all City owned playing fields.

Financial Impact

About 275 aluminium signs (30cm x 45cm) with stencilled Smoke Free Zone messages are needed to create smoke free zones at entrances to our municipal public buildings, and the main entrances and public gathering areas at City owned playing fields and playgrounds. The cost to produce and install these signs is estimated at \$24,000. Staff will research sources of provincial funding to help offset these costs.

Conclusion

Richmond City Council has been a leader on public policy towards reducing the harmful effects of tobacco use in Richmond. By designating smoke free zones (Option 1) at specific municipal owned outdoor public areas in the community, City Council will take immediate action in demonstrating leadership against the harmful effects of smoking and further promote Richmond as a City that encourages healthy lifestyle choices and our goal to be the best place in North America to raise children and youth.



Eric Stepura
Manager Sports and Community Events
(1274)



**Smoking is
discouraged within
10 metres of this sign.
Thank you!**

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