



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee

Date: June 28, 2002

From: Jim Hancock
Fire Chief

File: 5000-01

Re: Community Safety Building Program – Community Open Houses

Staff Recommendation

That the public input from the Community Open Houses held at Hamilton and Bridgeport Fire Halls, and the Main Fire Hall be received for information, and

That staff proceed with the purchase of the one-acre site located at 22451 Westminster Highway for the replacement of Hamilton Fire Hall.

Jim Hancock
Fire Chief

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Staff Report

Origin

At the May 14, 2002 Community Safety Committee staff were directed to solicit public input from the community on Bridgeport, Hamilton and the Community Safety Headquarters projects. In addition, staff were also directed to seek community input on the option to construct the proposed fire hall in McLean Park.

A series of community open houses were held to determine public support for the project, and to solicit public input on site locations and the integration of other facilities.

This report provides an summary of the information received from these Community Open Houses.

Background

Three community open houses were held in June at the following locations:

- Bridgeport Fire Hall, Tuesday, June 17th
- Hamilton Fire Hall, Wednesday, June 18th
- the Community Safety Building (Main Fire Hall), June 19th

The meetings were advertised in both the english and chinese local media, read-o-graphs advertising the meetings were set up at each location. In the case of Hamilton a notice also went out in the community newsletter and a display was set up at the Hamilton Family Picnic prior to the open house.

An information display was set up at each meeting which showed the building concept, site location, an overview of the Community Safety Building Program and future plans. The Fire Chief gave a presentation overviewing both the Community Safety Building program in general and site specific information. This was followed by a question and answer period.

The community were also given the opportunity to fill out brief questionnaires asking:

- if they supported the Community Safety Building Program,
- what they wanted to see incorporated into the design of the facilities, and
- whether they supported integrating community safety facilities

The Hamilton Fire Hall questionnaire also asked:

- **if the community supported the preferred location (adjacent to McLean Park) for the new Fire Hall.**

Analysis

The results of the questionnaires were unanimously in support for the Community Safety Buildings Replacement program. Public safety was stated as a priority for the community, and at

all three community meetings comments were made about the current safety buildings being out of date and unsafe seismically.

Bridgeport Fire Hall

The turnout for the Bridgeport meeting was quite small, most of the attendees were business people from the surrounding area. The comments made were positive and in support of replacing the current Bridgeport Fire Hall.

Community Safety Headquarters

Approximately twenty people attended the meeting at the main fire hall, some of the attendees were members of the tennis club. The comments made were supportive of the need to replace the main fire hall and the public safety building. There was an understanding of why this location was chosen. The members of the tennis club expressed concern that the club's needs might be forgotten, especially if the budget for the project is tight, or the project is delayed. However, everyone expressed appreciation that community input was being sought, and that it continue throughout the project.

Hamilton Fire Hall

There were about two dozen people overall in attendance at the Hamilton meeting. In addition the display boards and surveys were put out for several days at the Community Centre after the meeting. Comments were very supportive of a new fire hall, citing:

- growth in the area
- the remoteness of the community from the rest of the Richmond
- the state of the current hall
- the community's desire for a safe neighbourhood

Comments at the meeting and on the surveys indicate support for the preferred site (22451 Westminster Highway). Attendees noted that this location would provide security for the park, without infringing on the park. The proposal to locate the fire hall in the park was met with concern by most participants, the park is well used by the community and there was a perception that locating the fire hall in the park would be detrimental to the existing amenities, i.e. the sports field, playground and trails. A few participants held the opinion that city owned property should be used if possible, to preclude the need to purchase land.

Participants were also keen to have other facilities included in the project. When asked what other types of facilities they would like to see incorporated, attendees responded with the following:

- Community Police Station
- Community Centre space, i.e. a multi-purpose room
- Public washrooms

The rationale for including these amenities was the remoteness of the Hamilton community to the rest of the Richmond, and the need for additional community centre space. This could be used for safety courses such as first aid and CPR, in addition to regular recreational centre programming.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact.

Conclusion

The three community open houses indicate support for the Community Safety Replacement program. There were no issues arising from the Bridgeport meeting – the community that turned out for the meeting were in support of the project. The comments from the Community Safety Headquarters meeting were substantially similar, with the proviso that the tennis club's needs continue to be considered throughout the project. Comments from the Hamilton meeting indicate strong support for a new Fire Hall and that the preferred location be adjacent to McLean Park, and that other city facilities be considered in the design.

Comments also indicate appreciation for the opportunity to give input. Staff will continue to schedule community open houses when input from the community is needed.



Shawn Issel
Manager, Divisional Programs

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