



MINUTES

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, October 15th, 2001

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Acting Mayor Lyn Greenhill, Chair
Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Kiichi Kumagai (4:05 p.m.)
Councillor Bill McNulty
Councillor Harold Steves

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Monday, October 1st, 2001, be adopted as circulated.
CARRIED

DELEGATIONS

2. **Ms. Z. K. Ramji, 10275 Hayne Court, Regarding Interest And Penalty Levied Against Her 2000 Property Taxes.** (File No.: 0925-13) (REDMS No. 518654, 501704, 455825)

Ms. Ramji explained that the City had charged her with interest and a penalty for the late payment of her 2000 property taxes. She stated that she had purchased her home in June of 2000 and had been under the impression that her portion of the taxes on the property had been paid. Ms. Ramji advised that she had not been notified until June, 2001 that the 2000 property taxes were still outstanding. She expressed the opinion that the City should have informed her as the new owner, that the 2000 property taxes were still outstanding.

Discussion ensued among Committee members, staff and the delegation regarding this matter, during which advice was given by the Director of Finance Danley Yip and City Solicitor Paul Kendrick that the City did not have the authority to waive interest or penalties charged against a property. Also addressed during the discussion was the responsibility of the real estate agent and the Notary Public who handled the purchase of Ms. Ramji's new home.

(Councillor Kumagai entered the meeting at 4:05 p.m., during the above discussion.)

In response to questions, Ms. Ramji advised that her Notary Public refused to accept any responsibility for the error, and that it was her opinion that the City should have advised her that the 2000 property taxes had not been paid. Advice was also given by staff that due to the high volume of property transactions which involved new property owners, the onus was on the owner to ensure that any information with regard to property taxes was received by them. Further advice was given that a reminder notice was sent out following the deadline for payment of property taxes to remind those owners who had not paid their taxes that the payment of these taxes was now overdue, and that it was the responsibility of former owners to forward this notice to the new owners.

In concluding the discussion, the Chair advised Ms. Ramji that there was no action which the City could take to waive the interest or penalty, and she was urged to pursue the matter with her Notary Public.

3. **Mr. Russel Travis, 5191 Blundell Road, Regarding the Practice of Reverse Subscriptions for Newspapers.** (File No.: 0130-01) (REDMS No. 516802)

Mr. Travis stated that he had been a resident of Richmond since 1986, and that during that time he had been trying unsuccessfully to have delivery of the *Richmond News* to his door stopped. He stated that despite numerous visits and telephone calls to the principals of the newspaper to have his address removed from delivery lists, he was still finding a newspaper at the bottom of his steps, even though there was a sign posted on his mailbox indicating "no newspapers, pamphlets, junk mail, etc." Mr. Travis expressed the opinion that such deliveries were an invasion of his privacy and compromised the security of his home.

Mr. Travis also expressed concern about the impact to the environment because not only was only 40% of a newspaper was printed on recycled paper but 60% of the residents who received newspapers discarded these papers without reading them. He suggested that it would be more beneficial if the newspaper companies employed people to obtain subscriptions rather than delivering newspapers to homes until they were asked to stop. Mr. Travis urged the Committee to initiate the appropriate legislation to have "reverse subscriptions" made illegal.

A brief discussion ensued among Committee members, the delegation and staff on the matter, during which advice was given by City Solicitor Paul Kendrick that in 1995, as a result of problems arising with cablevision and reverse subscriptions, the Provincial Government amended the *Consumer Protection Act* to prohibit reverse subscriptions. He noted however that newspapers and other publications were exempt from this legislation.

As a result, Mr. Travis was advised to contact a local Member of Parliament as the City did not have the power to alter a Provincial statute. Before leaving the meeting, Mr. Travis provided Committee members with a copy of a letter which he had circulated on the matter of reverse subscriptions. A copy of this correspondence is on file in the City Clerk's Office.

4. **Capt. Bill Teague, #101 – 8700 Jones Road, Regarding Compliance With Dog Leashing Bylaws.** (File No.: 2345-20-GARR2) (REDMS No. 494812, 518202)

Capt. Teague asked that the following report be dealt with prior to his submission, and the Chair agreed to the request.

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION

5. **DESIGNATED DOG OFF-LEASH AREAS IN RICHMOND – UPDATE 2001**

(Report: Oct. 9/01, File No.: 7200-01) (REDMS No. 520488, 494812)

The Manager, Parks Administration & Programs, Mike Redpath, accompanied by the Manager, Community Bylaws, Sandra Tokarczyk, reviewed his report and recommendations with the Committee.

Discussion ensued on this matter, and in response to questions, the following information was provided:

- staff had not examined other areas on the west side of Richmond to replace the McCallan Road Right-of-Way area
- a comprehensive process of education and enforcement had been initiated to alert dog owners to their responsibilities
- staff would be promoting information on the dog off-leash areas with the RCMP and the SPCA
- staff would be reporting to the Committee in November regarding the renewal of the contract with the SPCA, and statistics would be included in that report on enforcement and the number of infractions, as well as comments from the public on the services provided by the SPCA
- staff provide the SPCA with specific directions and issues which need to be addressed and they were asked to arrange their service delivery as problems arose
- staff have also discussed bylaw enforcement with the RCMP
- the SPCA were provided with master keys to allow them access to the dyke

During the discussion, a suggestion was made that a proactive public relations program be undertaken, such as erecting a sign in the area, to advise the public that the McCallan Road Right-of-Way area was removed from the dog off-leash program because of the number of complaints received by the City from residents in the area about irresponsible dog owners.

Concern was also expressed during the discussion, that removal of the McCallan Road Right-of-Way area would only exacerbate the problem at Garry Point Park and along the West Dyke. In response, the suggestion was made that consideration should be given to implementing a “time zone” area, during which dogs would be totally banned from both Garry Point Park and the West Dyke.

Discussion continued on the matter, during which the following comments were made :

- dog owners had to understand that allowing their dogs to run off-leash was a privilege and not a right
- the problem relating to irresponsible dog owners would simply move to another area, and staff should be encouraged to consider other alternatives
- with respect to Garry Point Park and the West Dyke, which were both heavily used by the public, it had to be made clear that dogs were to be on-leash at all times as these two areas were not in the dog off-leash program
- it was time to proceed beyond educating dog owners about their responsibilities, to ticketing.

Capt. Bill Teague stated that while it was reassuring that the City seemed to have a handle on the issue, he was of the opinion that the problem was that penalties to irresponsible dog owners did not seem to be occurring. He stated that he had never seen an official anywhere in areas where offences were occurring.

With regard to Garry Point Park, Capt. Teague referred to a proposal he had suggested three years ago, which would ban all dogs from Garry Point Park during the summer months. He stressed however that it was essential that areas be provided where dogs can run off-leash, and suggested an area by the airport which was not frequented heavily by the public.

Discussion ensued among Committee members and the delegation on the issue of allowing dogs to run off-leash, during which Capt. Teague commented that because areas were provided for dogs to be off-leash, it would be reasonable to assume that areas should be provided where dogs were not permitted. It was noted during the discussion that the issue was with irresponsible dog owners and not the dogs.

Reference was made to the recommendation in the report that the Terra Nova Natural Area be designated as a dog free zone, and direction was given by the Committee that this area be so designated.

It was moved and seconded

That the McCallan Road Right-of-way Area be removed from the Designated Dogs Off-Leash Program.

Prior to the question on the motion being called, discussion continued on the need for strict enforcement in Garry Point Park. Reference was made to the proposal put forward by Capt. Teague that dogs be banned from the park during the summer months, and the comment was made that if enforcement of the dog on-leash regulations was not sufficient, then perhaps his suggestion could be implemented.

During the discussion, staff were asked to provide information on the cost to the City to clean up the West Dyke.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (5:02 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Monday, October 15th, 2001.

Acting Mayor Lyn Greenhill
Chair

Fran J. Ashton
Executive Assistant