



Council/School Board Liaison Committee

Date: Tuesday, October 22nd, 2002

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Harold Steves, Chair (1:28 p.m.)
Councillor Lyn Greenhill
School Trustee Sandra Bourque
School Trustee Gerry Retallick

Also Present: School Trustee Chris Evans
School Trustee Donna Sargent
K. L. Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, School District No. 38 (Richmond)
G. McLean, Manager, Facilities
C. V. Carlile, General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
D. Semple, Director, Parks
K. Sparrow, Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
M. Redpath, Manager, Parks Administration & Programs
F. J. Ashton, Executive Assistant, City Clerk's Office

Call to Order: The Acting Chair, Cllr. Lyn Greenhill, called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

1. It was moved and seconded
That the agenda for the meeting of Tuesday, October 22nd, 2002, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

MINUTES

2. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the Council/School Board Committee held on Tuesday, May 28th, 2002, be adopted as circulated.

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Prior to the question on the motion being called, a brief discussion ensued on the accuracy of a statement in the minutes which indicated “that a breach in the dyke could only occur if an earthquake occurred at high tide” and whether an amendment was required. It was agreed that an amendment to the minutes was not required.

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

3. BUSINESS ARISING

3.1 Update on Grass Cutting vs Community Use

(Oral report)

The Director, Parks, Dave Semple reported that adult users of school facilities were now required to book these facilities directly through the School District. He further reported that Council had adopted user fees for an artificial turf sports field, and a copy of the resolution adopted by Council on October 15th, 2002, was circulated to the Committee. Mr. Semple added that City staff would be working with Secretary-Treasurer Ken Morris on the implementation of a process for reserving the artificial turf field.

Discussion ensued among Committee members and staff on the complaints received by the City and the School District from adult users who now had to pay to rent school facilities. It was noted that many of the sports groups were now renting private facilities which offered improved surroundings for the same rate. Further advice was given that the block bookings for the Fall were now completed.

The Acting Chair reported on alleged incidents taking place at community centres which involved community associations and School District staff. Mr. Morris indicated that such action was possibly inappropriate and asked that the Acting Chair forward the information to him.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Richmond Substance Abuse Strategy (FCM Municipal Drug Strategy – Pilot Project)

(City report: Sept. 18/02; File No.: 3000-09) (REDMS No. 857398, 820630)

The Manager, Divisional Programs, Community Safety Division, Shawn Issel, advised that she was available to answer any questions about the project.

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Discussion ensued among Committee members and staff on the education component of the program, during which information was provided on a workshop held by the School District with members of the RCMP and parents to alert the parents to the types of drugs being used by teenagers today, the effects of these drugs on the users, and warning signs.

Reference was made to a statement in the education section which indicated that *'....in some schools and classrooms, attendance at drug education classes or events is not mandatory.'* Advice was given that attendance at drug education classes was mandatory, however, parents were given a form to fill out if they chose to prohibit their children from attending these classes, and they were required to cover the curriculum at home.

Reference was made to the age group of 'at-risk' teen drug users as being 13 to 15 years, and questions were raised about how this particular group would be targeted. Information was provided that the drug strategy was currently being developed, and the task force had recognized that youth was an area which needed to be addressed in greater detail. The comment was made that it was helpful that the School District had a representative on the task force.

Further discussion ensued on the participation of elementary and high school students in the School District's "Personal Planning" and "Career and Personal Planning" programs. Clarification was provided that parents were made aware of the general topics covered within the curriculum, and it was expected that every student would participate in the program as it was delivered in the classroom. If a parent made the decision that his or her child would not receive education on a particular topic, then rather than filling out a form (which was not the case), the parent advised the school principal accordingly, and the parent was then expected to teach the curriculum at home.

Comments were made about the need of school counsellors and teachers to have the sense that their work was supported by the community as a whole on an on-going basis. The suggestion was made that some of the City's gaming revenue could be used to provide funds for drug education programs, as funding was not secure enough to attract people who had the necessary knowledge, understanding and ability to work in this field.

In response, information was provided about the work of the Richmond Substance Abuse Task Force to develop a strategy which had permanence to it. Advice was given that the task force had recognized during its pilot program that permanence was important, and therefore, the strategies now being developed would include recommendations to make the strategy permanent.

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Information was provided on the 'five pillar' approach being taken by the task force, it being noted that the drug problem was a community issue and not the responsibility of any one agency.

Questions were raised about whether the task force membership included a parent. In response, advice was given that the task force included representatives from different agencies who had been recruited for their expertise in drug abuse issues. Further advice was given that the task force recognized that as the next step, parents would need to become involved in some way.

Discussion continued briefly, during which it was noted that while the School District supported a drug education program, the District did not have the funds available in their budget to hire resource people to work with teachers and counsellors.

4.2 School Sites Acquisition Charge

(Memo: Oct. 15/02) (For discussion)

Mr. Morris referred to the letter sent to Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie (dated September 24th, 2002), on the matter of School Site Acquisition Charges. He noted that the Board of School Trustees was concerned with the substantial increase in projected single family houses from 615 in 2001 to 7,590 in 2002.

The Manager, Policy Planning, Terry Crowe, accompanied by the Manager, Development Applications, Joe Erceg, and Planner Jenny Beran, responded to the concerns expressed by the Board. He explained that as a result of the population figures received from Census Canada in 2000, the City's projected figures were re-evaluated, and it was found that of the 16,621 new development units, half would be single family dwellings. It was noted that the 2001 figure for single family dwelling units was 615, and had jumped to 7,590 in 2002. During his explanation, Mr. Crowe acknowledged that the projection was high and suggested that this was so because of the change in the process in which information was gathered by City staff, who now reviewed actual building permits rather than counting the number of possible units in potential subdivision proposals. He indicated that the figures would be monitored and commented that it was possible that a decrease could occur in 2003.

Discussion ensued, during which it was noted that the School District prepared its capital plan based on the population projection figures provided by the City.

(Councillor Harold Steves entered the meeting at 1:28 p.m., during discussion on this matter, and assumed the Chair.)

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Discussion continued among Committee members and the delegation on the increased number of potential development units, and the impact which the children from the single family housing projects could have on (i) the District's data used to determine whether a new school was required in a particular area and (ii) future funding requests to the Provincial Government.

During the discussion, the suggestion was made that City staff could work with School District staff to revise development project figures.

4.3 Sewer Bylaw Charges

(Memo: Oct. 15/02)

Reference was made by Mr. Morris to recent correspondence from the City to the School Board about the City's intention to charge the School District on the quantity of drainage water collected from each school site.

The Manager, Sewerage & Drainage, Jim Young, then reviewed the history of the action taken by the City, during which he noted that the City was in the process of establishing a new drainage utility, which would result in landowners being charged for using the public drainage system.

Discussion ensued among Committee members and the delegation on the proposed charge and the rationale for including the former school on No. 8 Road. Advice was given that even though the building no longer functioned as a school, the site was still owned by the School District and therefore subject to charge. Further advice was given that City Council did have the opportunity to exempt the School District from paying the proposed charge.

Discussion continued on (i) whether the City would be paying a utility charge; and (ii) how the amount to be paid would be calculated. Advice was given that the City would not charge itself, and that the fee calculated was based on the amount of property which had been paved. Further advice was given that the new utility charge did not include the City's sanitary sewer system.

During the discussion, advice was given that the City had chosen to set up a drainage utility as a means of helping to determine its financial future, and would allow the City to increase its reserves to deal with deteriorating infrastructure. It was noted that the charge was not new but had previously been included in the City's property taxes.

Discussion then ensued on the lack of finances available to the School District to pay the new charge. Reference was made to the statement made by Mr. Young that City Council had the ability to exempt the School District from paying the charge. The comment was made that the City could expect a letter from the School Board, asking that City Council exempt the School District from paying such charge.

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In concluding the discussion, Mr. Young advised that a report could be submitted to Council on this matter in mid-November.

4.4 Old Mitchell School

(Memo: Oct. 15/02)

Mr. Morris reviewed the history of the old Mitchell School building, noting the results of a report which had indicated that the cost to upgrade the old building for re-use would be approximately \$2.5 to \$3 Million. He added that discussions had been held with various agencies about possible future uses for the former school and the potential for selling the property.

Jenny Beran then reported on the efforts of the City's Heritage Commission to conserve the building when it was determined that it would not be possible to preserve the structure. She stated that the suggestion had been made that the building be documented before its demolition, and that a smaller portion of the building, such as a classroom, be preserved.

Ms. Beran then provided information on the appropriate documentation which would be required, noting that the cost would be approximately \$14,000. She also provided information on another option which would be to document the building as part of the redevelopment of the site. Ms. Beran explained that at the time a landowner of a site with heritage buildings filed a redevelopment application for that site with the City, the City expected the landowner through the rezoning process, to undertake the appropriate documentation. She stated that it was the standard practice of the City to require landowners to complete preservation documentation.

Discussion ensued among Committee members and staff on the City's requirement that the old Mitchell School site be documented prior to demolition, during which it was noted that the School District did not have the funds available to develop the site or to document the former school. Information was provided during the discussion that the School District would be asked to take no action to demolish the old school building prior to the sale of the property to ensure (i) that at least a portion of the building would be saved, and (ii) that the documentation process was completed.

Questions were raised about the feasibility of simply taking photographs as a way of documenting the building, and information was provided by Ms. Beran on the current standards which had been implemented for the saving and documentation of historic buildings. Discussion then ensued on the feasibility of using the former school building as the site for a library.

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Information was provided that the Board of the Richmond Public Library was considering a location in the strip mall at No. 5 Road and Cambie Road as a possible site for the library because it would be less expensive than locating such a facility in the old school building.

In response to a question asked at the conclusion of the discussion on this matter, advice was given that the City would be waiting for the School District's response to approach the City with its plans for the property.

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

5.1 Project WET (Water Services School Program)

(City report – Apr. 19/02; File No.: 6650-01) (REDMS No. 694946)

Shawn Issel, accompanied by the Manager, Water Services, Steve McClurg, reviewed Project WET with the Committee. Discussion took place among the Committee and staff members on the success of the program, the interest of the children in learning about water usage and conservation, and the positive response of City water crews who had taught these children about their jobs. Reference was made to the letters received from the children as a result of the program, and the suggestion was made that these letters be forwarded to the School District for information.

During the discussion, information was also provided about the School District's extensive program to teach children how to reduce their impact on the environment. The comment was made that the School District's program should be connected to the City's program, and information was provided that City staff had worked with Bruce Beirsto of the School District on the development of Project WET.

In concluding the discussion, the Chair advised that the program had been initiated in October of 2001, for implementation in the Spring of 2002, and that it was hoped that Council and the School Board could become involved so that all Richmond elementary students could participate.

5.2 Youth Strategy

(City report: Sept. 24/02; File No.: 3425-02) (REDMS No. 863732)

The Director, Recreation & Cultural Services, Kate Sparrow, advised that a request for additional level funding would be submitted for consideration as part of the City's 2003 budget review process, in an effort to allow the current program to continue.

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Reference was made to the "Night Shift" program held at the Thompson Community Centre, and questions were asked about steps which would be taken to deal with any potential drug problems. Concern was expressed that parents would not support the program a drug problems were not addressed. In response, information was provided that a youth coordinator was at the centre, and that the RCMP had been involved with developing strategies to deal with the problem.

In concluding the discussion, appreciation was expressed by School Trustee Sandra Bourque to the City for the manner in which the City responded to the concerns raised by the School District about the lack of activities for youth, and in taking action to develop programs for this particular group. The hope was expressed that the program could continue and the comment made that as more members of the community became involved, the problems would lessen.

5.3 School Planning and Construction Schedule

(Memo: Oct. 15/02)

Mr. Morris briefly reviewed the construction schedule, during which he provided information on structural upgrades which were being made on several schools throughout Richmond. Information was also provided on funding being given to the School District for non-structural improvements in high risk areas.

5.4 Facilities Review Report

(Oral update)

Copies of the School District's "Facilities Review" report were provided to the Committee, a copy of which is on file in the City Clerk's Office. Information was provided that the purpose of the report was to review those facilities used by the School District and to identify certain areas of investigation, to ensure that the schools were being used as cost-effectively as possible.

Mr. Morris then provided information on four schools which were being recommended for closure, and discussion ensued among Committee members and staff on the closure of the schools and whether any consideration was being given to possible alternate uses for these facilities.

6. PENDING ITEMS

None.

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7. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next meeting of the Council/School Board Liaison Committee is scheduled to be held at 1:00 p.m., on Tuesday, January 21st, 2003 at the School District offices.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (2:50 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Council/School Board Liaison Committee held on Tuesday, October 22nd, 2002.

Councillor Harold Steves
Chair

Fran J. Ashton
Executive Assistant