



General Purposes Committee

Date: Monday, December 1st, 2003
Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall
Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair
Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Derek Dang
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Rob Howard
Councillor Bill McNulty
Councillor Harold Steves
Absent: Councillor Kiichi Kumagai
Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

It was moved and seconded

That the following matters be added to the agenda as additional items:

- (1) *Tall Ships Festival 2005; and*
- (2) *West Nile Virus.*

CARRIED

MINUTES

1. It was moved and seconded

That the minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes Committee held on Monday, November 17th, 2003 and on Thursday, November 20th, 2003, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

2. **ECONOMIC ADVISORY TASK FORCE REPORT**

(Report: November 27/03, File No.: 0100-20-RECO1) (REDMS No. 1099086)

The Chief Administrative Officer George Duncan introduced, Mr. Bruce Rozenhart, Co-Chair of the Economic Advisory Task Force. In turn, Mr. Rozenhart introduced the following members of the Task Force, Bruce Howell and Danny Leung. Also introduced was Ms. Florence Gordon, who represented the Richmond Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Rozenhart then spoke briefly about the constructive and positive meetings held with George Duncan and the Manager, Economic Development, Marcia Freeman. He indicated that the work of the Task Force was almost complete, and that the Task Force endorsed the recommendation which staff had submitted as a starting point to the creation of a work plan.

Considerable discussion then ensued among Committee members, Mr. Rozenhart and staff on:

- how economic development should be pursued in the future
- the proposed implementation of an Economic Development Action plan, including the establishment of business retention and development strategies with targets and timeframes; and the integration of overall land use planning initiatives for the City into this action plan
- the proposed formation of an Economic Advisory Committee (AEC) and the selection of twelve local business leaders who would be a broad cross-section of representatives to form this committee, and whether the Chamber of Commerce would be included
- the proposal to develop education and training as a key economic growth strategy for the City, and to review opportunities to enhance zoning for education and training facilities
- whether the City was taking full advantage of its MLAs and MPs at the Provincial and Federal Government levels in seeking funding assistance
- the need to create benchmarks to (i) update and track statistical economic information, and (ii) include business retention and development targets
- the five target areas which had been selected by the Task Force
- the Task Force recommendation regarding the integration of the overall land use planning initiatives for the City, and the opportunities for growth and potential development which exist
- the need for an economic sustainability vision

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- the rationale for recommending that the agricultural viability of the City's agricultural land be evaluated
- the rationale for recommending that the proposed business development strategy targets take into consideration, the City's cultural links, such as through the Sister City Committee and other cultural programs
- the need for the development of an economic development plan for the City as a result of changes which had been occurring in the world
- the proposed land use strategy recommendations
- whether the Task Force had given any consideration to the development of the former BC Packers property and the City-owned River Road property.

During the discussion, the Task Force was congratulated on a well laid out and well written report.

Reference was made to the staff recommendation. In response, Mr. Duncan indicated that staff would be assigned to complete the work plan as this plan would help to determine the City's long term development strategies. In reply to further questions about whether additional staff resources would be required, Mr. Duncan expressed confidence that these additional resources would not be required, and that the work plan should be completed within existing budget levels. He stated that there could be costs incurred for specific initiatives and these costs would be reported to Council for approval.

Discussion ensued among Committee members and Mr. Duncan on the issue of whether additional resources would be required, with reference being made to the number of economic development staff per capita in other BC jurisdictions. It was noted during the discussion that much of the work had already been done with the completion of the Economic Advisory Task Force report, and that it was simply a matter of refocusing resources to undertake the work plan.

The Mayor concluded the discussion by thanking the members of the Task Force for its tremendous work on preparing an excellent plan, and for assisting the City in the development of an economic development strategy.

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the recommendations outlined in the Report - Enhancing Richmond's Economic Sustainability – from the Economic Advisory Task Force (attached to the report dated November 27th, 2003, from the Chief Administrative Officer), be endorsed .*
- (2) *That staff prepare a Work Plan in support of implementing the recommendations of the Task Force.*

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It was moved and seconded

That a copy of the report "Enhancing Richmond's Economic Stability" (dated November 24th, 2003, from the Economic Advisory Task Force), along with a copy of the staff report and recommendations, be forwarded to the Council/School Board Liaison Committee for their information and to appropriate stakeholders who deal with the City.

CARRIED

FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

3. REVIEW OF FUELLING OPTIONS IN RICHMOND

(Report: Nov. 26/03, File No.: 8060-20-7634/7635) (REDMS No. 1098356)

The Manager, Economic Development, Marcia Freeman, reviewed the report with the Committee.

Discussion then ensued among Committee members and staff on:

- the rationale for Council first opposing the introduction of self service gas stations (with attached convenience stores) in the 1970s because of that Council's concerns about the impact which these service stations could have on local 'mom and pop' convenience stores; and the rationale for the proposal now being presented
- the tendency of self service gas station operators to eliminate service bays and the impact which this could have on mechanics currently employed at full service gas stations which had service bays, if such stations were converted to self serve
- the proposal to allow the inclusion of convenience stores at gas stations and the positive results of such action, including less travel time, less cars on the road, less pollution
- the decline in the number of gas stations within Richmond because of the inability of the property owners to redevelop their sites to meet market demands
- the increase in business and revenue which could result from allowing self serve gas stations in the City.
- the feasibility of removing 'convenience stores' from the list of acceptable uses in the Zoning & Development Bylaw, which would result in the rezoning of a property if a gas station owner wished to incorporate such a store into its plan
- the needs of the disabled, senior citizens and overall, the customer, which must be considered
- why the proposal was recommending a combination of self serve and full serve gas stations

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- whether City residents wished to have the opportunity to use self serve gas stations.

Mr. Rick Bell, representing Equitas Real Estate Advisors Limited, advised in response to questions, that the proposal was to have full serve gas stations at all the gas stations in Richmond, along with an option for self serve for those operators who choose to do so. He added that there would be no elimination of service bays for those stations whose operators choose to have self serve. Mr. Bell continued, advising that there would be a fixed number of pumps with one full serve island and two or three self serve islands. He added that his clients had committed to offering both full serve and self serve at all times, rather than closing the full serve island at specific times and requiring customers to use the self serve islands.

Discussion then ensued among Committee members, Mr. Bell and staff on the proposal. Questions were raised about the feasibility of including within the bylaw, a requirement that a certain percentage of gas stations in Richmond would remain as full serve. The Staff Solicitor responded that such a requirement could be possible, however, she did not recommend that Council undertake such a commitment. Ms. Bittel advised that the bylaw amendments required that self serve would only be permitted in conjunction with full serve gas stations.

Reference was made to the difference in pricing between self serve and full serve gas. Discussion ensued on the rationale for the pricing and the financial impact which this could have on those people were disabled and unable to pump their own gas, and who would be forced to utilize a full serve island, and ultimately, pay a higher price for gas. Advice was given by Mr. Bell that discussions had been held with the Richmond Committee on Disability on this matter, and as a result, his clients had committed to provide the same level of service at the lower price for the disabled, who, due to their handicap, were forced to use full serve pumps. He stated that evidence would have to be provided, i.e. a valid parking permit placard, to obtain the lower price. He further stated that his clients were prepared to have this requirement written into the proposed bylaw.

Also discussed was whether the same treatment being given to the disabled would be extended to senior citizens. In response, advice was given that meetings had been held with the Seniors Advisory Council about the introduction of self serve gas stations. Mr. Bell stated however, that the issue of pricing was not addressed as it was illegal to discuss price setting. The suggestion was made however, that the client's approach with the disabled should be extended to include senior citizens.

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Discussion continued, with concerns being expressed about whether the community supported the introduction of self serve gas, and about the impact which this could have on 'mom and pop' convenience store operations and to the remaining service bays. Concern was also expressed about credit card fraud occurring at gas stations, and comments were made that more information was required as to (i) why the proposal was being submitted at this time, and (ii) whether Richmond residents supported the proposal.

Mr. Vince Miele, Chair of the Richmond Community on Disability referred to correspondence dated October 3rd, 2003, from Ms. Frances Clark to Council, which indicated that the Committee supported the proposed 'split serve' model based on a number of conditions which were outlined in the letter. A copy of this correspondence is on file in the City Clerk's Office.

Mr. Miele noted that the Committee had always opposed the introduction of self-serve gas stations because of the barriers which those drivers with disabilities had to face because they were unable to get out of their vehicles to pump their own gas, which made them feel like they were truly disabled. He stated that it was because the industry had offered to provide the same level of serve to self serve and full serve disabled customers, that the Committee was offering its support for the proposal. Mr. Miele expressed agreement that this requirement should be written into the proposed bylaw, as well as enforcement requirements.

Mr. Miele spoke further on the number of people which would be required to be on duty to operate split serve gas stations; the difference in pricing between full serve and self serve gas stations; whether the Committee would continue to support the proposal if the conditions outlined in the correspondence were not addressed, and the need of the disabled to be treated equally.

Mr. Bob Ransford spoke about the evolution of services over the past years, referring to those services which were no longer offered, such as door to door milk service, and the need of the City to move forward. He stated that he understood the concerns of the disabled and suggested that inclusion of the requirement regarding the provision of the same level of service to the disabled into the bylaw should help to address these concerns. Mr. Ransford stated that market demand would deal with the way in which gasoline suppliers supply their product to the public. He concluded his remarks by stating that the Committee should be thinking about whether new gas stations would impact local neighbourhoods.

As a result of the discussion, the following **referral** motion was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

That the report (dated November 26th, 2003, from the Manager, Economic Development), regarding a Review of Fuelling Options in Richmond, be referred to staff to work with the applicant to show the benefits of "split service" gas stations to the community.

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The question on the motion was not called, as staff were requested to:

- (1) amend the proposed bylaw to require that any provision of a convenience store could only be undertaken through rezoning;
- (2) amend the proposed bylaw in such a manner that senior citizens and the disabled would be treated equally with respect to receiving the self service gas price when using a full service island, and include enforcement regulations;
- (3) provide information on credit card fraud to determine if the figures contained in the report were correct, and whether credit card fraud also occurred in other industries;
- (4) obtain information on the experience in the State of Oregon with respect to self-serve gas stations; and
- (5) provide information on the impact which the establishment of self-serve gas stations could have on small convenience stores and service station bays.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED** with Cllr. Howard opposed.

The Chair advised that the meeting would now recess into closed session (6:21 p.m.).

The open meeting reconvened at 7:09 p.m.

4. **RCMP ADDITIONAL LEVEL REQUESTS – REFERRAL FROM THE NOVEMBER 25TH, 2003 FINANCE SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING**
(Material distributed previously.)

The Chair advised that this matter would be postponed to a future meeting.

5. **WEST NILE VIRUS PROGRAM PLANNING**

Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt referred to a press release issued by Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services regarding Funding to Assist West Nile Program Planning. She advised that the Provincial Government had allocated up to \$1.6 Million to assist with the cost of the program, and that each municipality could receive \$50,000.

It was moved and seconded

That the appropriate steps be taken to apply for funding from the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, in the amount of \$50,000, to assist with the control of the spread of the West Nile Virus.

CARRIED

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6. TALL SHIPS FESTIVAL 2005

Reference was made to correspondence received from Ms. Janice Podmore, Acting Chair of the Richmond Tall Ships Festival Society, which indicated that the Society was withdrawing its offer to host the Tall Ships event in 2005.

Discussion then ensued among Committee members and staff on issues relating to the Tall Ships Festival, including:

- how to deal with the 'right of first refusal' agreement which the City currently held with ASTA and whether action should be taken now or later to relinquish these rights
- the options which were available to the City
- the impact of this decision, if any, on the tall ship which had indicated an interest in visiting Richmond in 2004
- the impact which not hosting the event in 2005 could have on the likelihood of the City hosting tall ship events in subsequent years.

As a result of the discussion, the following motions were introduced:

It was moved and seconded

That the Richmond Tall Ships Festival Society be thanked for its hard work.

CARRIED

It was moved and seconded

That staff report as quickly as possible on the status of the 'rights of first refusal'.

The question on the motion was not called, as discussion continued on whether the rights of first refusal should be relinquished now rather than waiting until January of 2004.

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

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting adjourn (7:31 p.m.).

CARRIED

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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, December 1st, 2003.

Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie
Chair

Fran J. Ashton
Executive Assistant, City Clerk's Office