



MINUTES

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday, November 29, 2000
Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall
Present: Councillor Derek Dang, Acting Chair
Councillor Malcolm Brodie
Councillor Ken Johnston
Councillor Linda Barnes
Mayor Greg Halsey-Brandt
Absent: Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Also Present: Councillor Lyn Greenhill
Councillor Bill McNulty
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 Community Services Committee held on Tuesday, November 15, 2000, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

DELEGATION

2. **POVERTY IN RICHMOND: A SENSE OF BELONGING**

Ms. Lois Carson Boyce read a submission, which is attached as Schedule 1 and forms a part of these minutes, to the Committee.

In response to a question from the Mayor as to why a two step approach had been taken, Helen Davidson explained that this had been a deliberate choice. The first step was to create awareness of the issues; the second step would then be to hear from all groups on initiatives that would address the issues. It was hoped that the implementation of the recommendations would be a result of partnership between the different groups involved that would allow for the groups to act independently.

The Committee thanked the Child and Family Issues Advisory Committee of the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee for their comprehensive report.

It was moved and seconded

That the report "Poverty in Richmond: A Sense of Belonging" be received for information.

CARRIED

ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION

3. FIRE/RESCUE OPERATIONAL ACTION PLAN - FINAL REPORT

(Report: Oct. 2/00, File No.: ..) (REDMS No. 204164,205732)

Fire Chief Jim Hancock advised the Committee of the Year One achievements in the department, namely: better management, improved morale, increased career development, a review of key services and the implementation of new initiatives. Captain Hancock also noted that improved technology was a priority for Year Two and that he hoped that Captain Mason would continue his role with Ecom after his retirement.

It was moved and seconded

That the report "Richmond Fire/Rescue Operational Action Plan - Final Report, October 31, 2000", (attached to the report dated October 2nd, 2000 from the Fire Chief), be received for information.

CARRIED

4. MANAGER'S REPORT

Fire Chief Hancock announced the appointments of Dave Scorgy, as the new Deputy Fire Chief, and Captain Gill, as the new Community Relations officer. Chief Hancock also noted the second Deputy Fire Chief position would be filled by Wayne Stevens, of Ajax, Ontario, as of February 5, 2001. Congratulations were given to the new people and also to Captain Sly on his retirement. Captain Sly was commended by the Committee for the immense benefit he has had not only on the Fire Department but also the City.

The Director of Parks, Dave Semple, reported that he had met with the Steveston Tram Society. Mr. Semple said that a report would be complete in January which would identify the options and possible locations of the tram. Also noted was the \$750,000. value of the tram and the interest other communities have shown in the tram.

A report on the various options for placement of the recently completed Public Art sculptures will be submitted to the Community Services committee in January.

The Manager, Parks, Gord Barstow, commended the Roads Department for their work on the west dyke.

The Manager, Parks Administration and Programs, Mike Redpath, reported that most of the Christmas lighting for City Hall, the wreaths and the tree on the Number Two Road bridge were in place, although some work on the timers was being undertaken by the Electrical Department.

The Manager, Arena Services, Vern Jacques, reported on the appearance of James Waller into the community as a sex offender. During the discussion that followed it was noted that the information that had been released was an extraordinary circumstance due to the length of history, refusal of treatment and the violence of the attacks of this offender. No further information would be released due to the Privacy Act, and the need for continued vigilance was noted.

Councillor McNulty then referred to the presentation Tourism Richmond made to Council in regard to the Ministry of Transport lands. The brief discussion that ensued concluded that the referral to staff was conclusive and required no amendment.

ADJOURNMENT

It was MOVED and SECONDED
That the meeting adjourn (5:00 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Wednesday, November 29, 2000.

Councillor Derek Dang
Chair

Deborah MacLennan
Administrative Assistant

Good Afternoon members of the Community Services Committee and members of Council. My Name is Lois Carson Boyce and on behalf of the Child and Family Issues Advisory Committee of the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee, it is my pleasure to present to you the recently released report, **Poverty in Richmond: A Sense of Belonging.**

Sitting with me are Michael Goldberg, Research Director of SPARC-BC, the consultant hired for this project. And Helen Davidson, co-chair of the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council.

Over the past 20 years, the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council (RCSAC) has played an active role in Richmond as an advisory committee to the City of Richmond. The RCSAC is an inter-agency council composed of staff and volunteers from community service agencies. The RCSAC offers its members an opportunity to network and share information, advises City Council on social issues, and holds community forums.

In the fall of 1999, the Child, Youth and Family Issues Committee of the RCSAC was asked to identify one or two issues it would focus on for the year. The committee decided to focus on poverty.

Some members of the Committee are here with me - they include staff and volunteers who represent a diverse group of community

services. A complete list of committee members can be found on page 25 of the report.

Funding and support for the report was obtained from the United Way and the City of Richmond, through its annual grant to the RCSAC.

The main objectives of the Report Card are to provide accurate information on poverty in our community and to support and assist in the development of community initiatives. The Richmond Poverty Report Card is not meant to change the community conditions it profiles.

The City of Richmond is considered one of the healthiest and wealthiest communities in British Columbia. The average family income in 1995 was \$55,703 and the average value of a dwelling was \$317,703. The city has a thriving economy, low unemployment and extensive community programs. The Report was commissioned to provide an understanding of the face of poverty in the midst of what is considered to be an affluent community.

Highlights of the findings include:

- Richmond has poverty. In 1996, 22.9% of all families had incomes below the Low Income Cut-off, the measurement used by Statistics Canada. Over 1/5 of all Richmond families lived in poverty. Nearly 1/3 of all children lived in poverty. In that same year, Richmond had one of the highest poverty gaps in the

country.

- Richmond neighbourhoods with the highest incident of poverty among economic families in 1996 were Cambie West (39%), Bridgeport (32%) and City Centre (28%).
- Richmond had a higher percentage of families living in poverty than Surrey (18.7%) and the GVRD (18.7%) and was identical to Burnaby.
- In Richmond, more children lived in poverty in two-parent families (4,385 families) than in lone parent families (1,220).
- Richmond has been impacted by an influx of immigrants, mostly from Pacific Rim countries. Research indicates that while immigrants generally earn less in the earlier years of settlement, their income level does rise to that of Canadian born residents.
- 41.6% of renter households paid more than 30% of their 1995 household income on rent. The average rent in 1996 was \$904.
- In April 1999, Richmond had 1,708 non-market housing units, but there were more than 9,000 families with incomes below the poverty line.

- Two themes emerged in interviews and focus groups held with people living in poverty. First, respondents overwhelmingly feel excluded from life in the community. Second, respondents have few choices in the decisions they make. These themes are echoed in studies across the country.
- Supportive neighbourhoods can have a huge impact on the lives of families and their children.
- Neighbourhoods with mixed income levels and a high level of cohesiveness benefit the lives of children.

In commissioning this report, members of the Committee understood that it is not the report itself that will change the lives of those living in poverty. It is the community response - by all levels of government, agencies, and individuals - that will improve the lives of those in our community who daily face difficulties. A wide range of community partners needs to be involved to successfully develop and continue community initiatives. This report and its content offer an unprecedented opportunity to determine a new and realistic approach to this situation.

Yesterday, a community forum was held at the Cultural Centre to present the report and begin a discussion with community partners. Over 60 people attended the forum yesterday. They came from health, education, municipal government, provincial government, city advisory committees, recreation, community agencies, unions and

the business community. They listened to panellists discuss the report and the reality of poverty in the community. And they raised important issues and discussed community initiatives.

Several community issues were discussed that have a significant impact on the lives of people living in poverty. The four main issues discussed were:

- **ONE: The need for a legal advocate.** Funding is needed for an advocate who would be available to assist with questions of rights and entitlement in areas such as housing, benefits, mental health and human rights.
- **TWO: Lack of affordable housing units.**
We acknowledge the commitment the city has given through the provision of land to non-profits for projects over the year. Yet affordable housing is consistently raised as one of the major issues in the community. There was discussion around affordable housing for youth and the disabled, supported housing for seniors and bigger units for large families. The lack of shelter space in Richmond is also of concern.
- **THREE: A discussion on the barriers to recreation.** The city is to be commended for having a fee access program for recreation but details of the program need to be better communicated. Other barriers to recreation such as cost of equipment and transportation also need to be discussed.

- **FOUR: Support for early childhood initiatives.** It was recognized that for every dollar invested in a child's early years, seven dollars would be saved in the long run.

There was also lengthy discussion about the importance of working together. The business community needs to be involved in community solutions. Faith organizations see many of the invisible faces of poverty and want to support community initiatives. The federal and provincial governments must be lobbied for increased funding for affordable housing. Community agencies need to continue responding to the needs of the clients they serve. And, along with other partners, the City of Richmond can work together with the RCSAC in playing an integral role in coordinating a community response.

We would like the opportunity to come back to you at a later date with specific recommendations resulting from the report and community forum. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share this report with you.

We welcome any questions you may have. Michael Goldberg can answer any technical questions about the report and Helen Davidson, who chaired this project, can answer any questions you may have about the process and the continuation of this project.