



General Purposes Committee

Date: Monday, February 18, 2008

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair
Councillor Linda Barnes (5:21 p.m.)
Councillor Cynthia Chen
Councillor Derek Dang
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Rob Howard
Councillor Harold Steves (4:25 p.m.)

Absent: Councillor Bill McNulty

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:23 p.m.

MINUTES

A request was made that Part (2) of the motion under the heading "Canada Line Information and Advertising Displays" in the minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on Monday, February 4th, 2008, be amended to read as:

"(2) That staff report back to Council with a pilot implementation plan giving consideration to an option that includes revenues generated from advertising, and one that does not include revenues generated from advertising.

1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Monday, February 4th, 2008, be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

At this point, Councillor Harold Steves entered the meeting (4:25 p.m.).

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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

2. **THE GARDEN CITY LANDS – AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE EXCLUSION APPLICATION**

(Report: February 15, 2008, File No.: 08-4105-20-20077381719) (REDMS No. 2343964, 2343687, 2244254, 2341370)

Joe Erceg, General Manager, Planning and Development, accompanied by Cecilia Achiam, Senior Coordinator, Major Projects & Development Applications, reviewed the report with the Committee. Mr. Erceg provided a brief history associated with the Garden City Lands, and advised the Committee that if the agreement was to become invalid, the lands would likely be tied up in legal action by the Musqueam Indian Band, and the City would not own a portion of the Garden City Lands, or have any jurisdiction over the land use and future development of the site.

Mr. Erceg advised the Committee of the Open Houses recently held by the City, including one at the Musqueam Indian Band Office. He further advised that the deadline for the public to submit their comments was Friday, February 15th, 2008, and results from the open houses were expected to be made available within the next two weeks, prior to the Public Hearing scheduled for the Garden City Lands on March 11, 2008.

Representing the Canada Lands Company (CLC), Randy Fasan accompanied by Doug Kester advised that the representatives from the Musqueam Indian Band were unable attend today's meeting, as they were meeting with their consultants to review the application. He further advised that the Musqueam Indian Band would be reviewing the results from their open house, and that changes would be made to the Musqueam Community Needs section, and some portions of the application.

Mr. Kester advised that in order to pre-empt the Garden City Lands site from being divided either east west or north south, the word "scattered" had been used in reference to the distribution of the Public Lands within the MOU and PSA. He further advised that in conformity with the wording in the PSA, the City would have the ability to apply the best planning principles to the Public Lands in order to divide the land into the most optimal configuration.

During the ensuing discussion, and in response to questions, the following was noted:

- if the agreement was unsuccessful, it would be highly likely that the Musqueam Indian Band would reinvigorate their legal action to protect their interests in the land;
- a legal document offering the Musqueam Indian Band the first right to purchase the Lands does not exist;

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- if the Lands are not removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), the eventual use would depend on the conditions of the site and its surroundings;
- the CLC does not receive support from the government, as it is a self financing, non-governmental agency; and
- the occurrence of a federal court case where a First Nation had successfully ascertained land from the Federal Government could not be confirmed as having taken place in Canada.

Ned Pottinger, of Pottinger Gaherty Environmental Consultants Ltd, spoke about the Garden City Lands site in terms of agricultural viability and suitability. He advised that the site would require extensive remedial work related to irrigation and drainage, and commented that the site is not an ideal place for agricultural use given its urban use surroundings.

Mr. Pottinger then spoke about the opportunity to provide agricultural benefits and assistance to the farming community through an Agricultural Endowment Fund from developing the Musqueam and CLC portion of the Garden City Lands.

Joost Bakker, of Hotson Bakker Bonafice Haden Architects, spoke about the site's urban surroundings, the City's transit oriented strategy, and the city wide context. Mr. Bakker advised that the site would accommodate 10,000 to 12,000 people, and could assist in addressing the pressures related to the growth of the population.

Reference was made to the minutes of a meeting held by the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission on September 1, 2006, and in particular, to a statement found in Staff Agrologist, Trevor Murrie's report, indicating that in Mr. Murrie's opinion, there were no significant limitations to agricultural capability to restrict the agricultural use of the soils on the Garden City Lands. Advice was provided that Mr. Murrie's report had not taken into consideration several factors associated with agricultural suitability, including the location of the site.

A discussion ensued among Committee members and representatives from the various agencies, and the following was noted:

- if the site land was improved with irrigation and drainage, and lime was added to the soil, it could be possible to grow vegetables on the site;
- the cost of a municipal water supply to the site for agricultural use would be high, and a ditch system would not be used.

Further discussion took place about factors taken into consideration when classifying, and determining suitability of soil for particular types of crops.

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In answer to a question about the management of the Agricultural Endowment Fund, staff advised that the current opinion regarding the fund was that it was intended for legitimate agricultural purposes, and not for hobby farming. Other details of the fund were expected to be established subsequent to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) process.

Olga T. Katcheva, #8 – 7680 Gilbert Road, advised the Committee that she had avidly attended the Garden City Open House, and shared her findings, which were of great concern to her. Ms. Katcheva felt that (i) important information was missing from the presentation material at the open house; (ii) a language barrier existed between the public and those hosting the open house; (iii) the representatives at the open house were intimidating; (iv) the language of the feedback submission form was complicated; and (v) the online feedback form was designed in a manner which would not allow you to submit it without selecting one of the options presented by the City, whether you agreed with it or not.

At this point, Councillor Linda Barnes entered the meeting (5:21 p.m.).

Jim Wright, 8300 Osgoode Drive, stated that it would be a travesty of democracy if the Garden City ALR application moves onto the next stage without the citizens of Richmond being genuinely informed and consulted. He voiced concern related to the Garden City Lands Open House feedback submission form, believing that it was misleading, and prevented the citizens from truly submitting their views. Mr. Wright spoke about smart growth principles and stated his belief that the term smart growth was misused when associated with the Garden City Lands.

Reference was made to densification, and how it actually protects farm land by consuming less development land.

In answer to a question, Mr. Wright stated that he'd like to see the community being given impartial and objective information, presented in a survey or feedback form that would allow the citizens an equal opportunity to be heard.

In answer to a question, Mr. Erceg advised that the possibility of building a Trade and Exhibition Center (T&E) on the Garden City Lands still existed, and was referenced in the agreement.

Mr. Erceg further advised that the City may own up to 50% of the Lands, and that the agreement provides for up to 15% of the Lands to be used for a proposed T&E. If the T&E does not proceed, the designated portion of the Lands (15%) would be divided between the City and the CLC/Musqueam.

Phyllis Carlyle, General Manager, Law & Community Safety, advised that the PSA envisions the CLC and the City jointly agreeing on any Official Community Plan (OCP), rezoning, and subdivision requirements upon Council's final approval. The CLC will be representing the interest of the Musqueam through the agreement.

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Ms. Carlyle also advised that if an OCP, rezoning, or subdivision was not approved by Council, then the parties would discuss the issue further, and that in the event that an agreement was unattainable, there is no provision for an arbitration process.

De Whalen, 13631 Blundell Road, requested the Committee to reconsider the block application to remove the Garden City Lands from the ALR, and then provided a brief history associated with the community gardens at the Fantasy Gardens site in Richmond. She spoke about the remedial action taken on that site in order to successfully grow an assortment of vegetables, including tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, potatoes corn, squash and Chinese greens. She expressed her belief that if similar action was taken on the Garden City Lands, they could be used for test farming and educational farming. Ms. Whalen expressed her belief that if the lands were left in the ALR designation, they would eventually become undesirable and of no value to the Musqueam.

At this point Councillor Howard left the meeting (6:05 p.m.).

In answer to a question, Ms. Whalen expressed that she felt the agreement to receive 50% of the lands was not acceptable, noting that the absence of provisions for dispute resolution in the agreement was undesirable.

At this point Councillor Howard returned to the meeting (6:08 p.m.).

Gordon Kibble, 11171 – 4th Avenue, stated that he was speaking as an individual member of the Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE), and not on behalf of the Committee. He then questioned why ACE had not had an opportunity to review the Garden City Lands ALR exclusion application and provide input, and why the application was not being referred to ACE by resolution.

Staff advised that ACE and any member of the public was be able to access the report about the Garden City Lands ALR exclusion application since it was public information.

Arzeena Hamir, 8480 Dayton Court, spoke about the importance of urban agriculture, and advised that ongoing climate changes would impact food security, and by the year 2020, major exporters of food such as California are predicted to become net importers of food. She expressed concerns related to Richmond's food security needs, and stated that Richmond needs to grow its own food, in order to be a liveable city. She also remarked that at this time, Richmond has only four community gardens.

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Ms. Hamir made reference to an agreement by the Soccer Association to decommission some of their fields if the City agreed to build artificial turf fields. She felt the City had fulfilled its commitment, and that the Association should give up 50 of its 100 grass fields. In conclusion, she stated that the application for exclusion of the ALR going forward to the Agricultural Land Commission states that the Lands were not acceptable for commercial farming, but were suitable for urban agriculture.

A discussion ensued, during which information was provided that farms under five acres were considered to be hobby farms, and that some of these hobby farms were the main source of produce during the summer months in Richmond. Concern was expressed and questions were raised about why the Agricultural Endowment Fund could not be used to assist hobby farmers.

It was moved and seconded

That

(1) *The following recommendation be forwarded to Public Hearing:*

That Council endorse the "Block Application" (Attachment 1) to exclude the properties known as the "Garden City Lands" bounded by Garden City Road, Alderbridge Way, No. 4 Road and Westminster Highway from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) on behalf of the Musqueam Indian Band (Musqueam), the City of Richmond and the Canada Lands Company (CLC), collectively known as "the partners"; and

(2) *This report be referred to Richmond Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee on the Environment for their comments and input to Council prior to the Public Hearing; and*

(3) *The "Block Application" be forwarded to a Public Hearing on March 11, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Richmond City Hall.*

The question on the motion was not called, as Councillor Harold Steves gave a brief presentation about the shortfall of parkland in Richmond, a copy of Councillor Steves' submission is attached as Schedule 1, and forms part of these minutes.

Discussion then took place about missing this opportunity to own part of the Lands by leaving the Lands in the ALR designation. Various comments were made by the Councillors in support of and in opposition to the application going forward. Concerns were expressed about the consequences the City would face if the lands were removed from the ALR, and subsequently if the deal did not go forward with the CLC, and Musqueam.

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In answer to questions, Mike Redpath, Manager, Parks - Programs, Planning & Design advised that the Garden City Lands are designated as park and open space in the OCP, and that park and open space are directly tied to development and growth.

Councillor Steves, clarified that during his presentation, he was not suggesting that the City purchase the lands, rather that the Lands be left in the ALR so that the City would not be forced into the position of having to purchase them later at a much higher price.

Discussion continued, and concern was expressed about: (i) the precedent that would be set for adjacent agricultural properties, if the Garden City Lands were removed from the ALR, and if those property owners could expect to be granted exclusion from the ALR, and (ii) the City's responsibility for provisions of parkland if residential development takes place on the Garden City Lands.

The Chair announced that the meeting would now recess (7:07 p.m.), in order to call the Public Hearing to order.

The open General Purposes Committee reconvened at 7:08 p.m..

As discussion continued, questions were raised as to whether or not the CLC and Musqueam portion of the land could be removed from the ALR, and advice was provided that the City's portion of land had yet to be designated, therefore it would be difficult to a remove a selected portion of the Lands from the ALR.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Linda Barnes, S. Halsey-Brandt, and Steves opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (7:17 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, February 18, 2008.

Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie
Chair

Shanan Dhaliwal
Executive Assistant, City Clerk's Office

GARDEN CITY LANDS PARK NEEDS FACT SHEET NO.1
 Harold Steves, BscAg,
 City Councillor, Richmond

The Richmond Parks Recreation and Cultural Services Master Plan states that we presently have a shortfall of 155.4 acres of parkland in Richmond but we will need an additional 676 acres of parkland by 2021 for a population of 212,000 people, just 13 years from now. That is the parkland needed for 40,000 more people but not for 120,000 more people that is proposed.

A look at the Parkland Allocation graph shows that actually 2,120 acres minus 1,288 acres equals 831 additional acres that are required over what is parkland today.

There are only three large acreages in urban Richmond that are available to make up that park deficit, the Garden City Lands, DND Lands and the Quilchena Golf Course. All three together they would compensate for one-half of Richmond's park needs by 2021. As there is no other acreage available all additional parkland will have to be acquired by purchasing, demolishing and rehabilitating older home to parkland at a cost of \$2.5 million for purchase only.

Whether or not the land is removed from the ALR, owned by the City, Crown, or Musqueam, the City should be reserving the entire Garden City Lands site for future park use. At present the agricultural value of the property is under \$100,000 per acre. Once it is out of the ALR it's value increases to over \$2 million per acre.

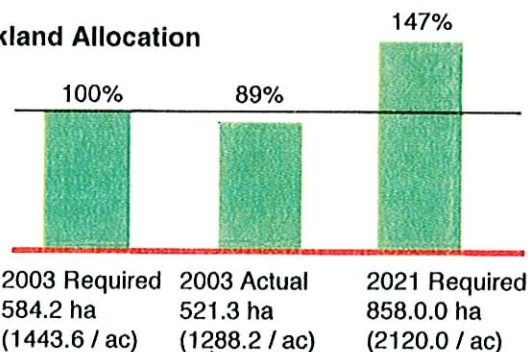
d - Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Master Plan

Overall

Facility Quick Facts:

- Total inventory of buildings in current replacement dollars is \$127,347,000 (incl. Riverport facilities and new Cambie Library)
- Lifecycle upgrades estimated in current dollars at \$13,558,100 or 89% average building life remaining
- Current parkland allocation shortfall of 155.4 acres (62.9 hectares) will increase to a shortfall in 2021 of 676 acres (273 hectares), roughly ten times the area of the existing Minoru Precinct

Parkland Allocation

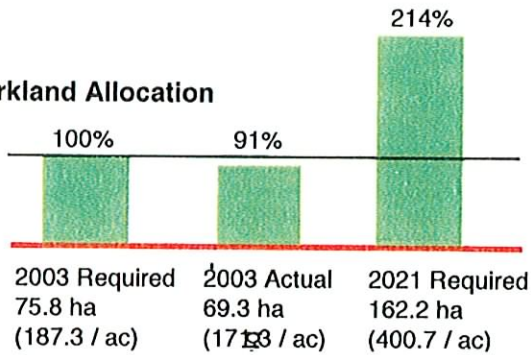


City Centre

Facility Quick Facts:

- Brighthouse Library and Cultural Centre built 1992; value \$15.1 million, \$1.4 million in upgrades
- Gateway Theatre built 1984; value \$6.8 million, upgrades \$900,000
- Minoru Chapel built 1891
- Minoru Seniors Activity Centre built 1986; valued at \$2.35 million, upgrades \$854,000
- Centennial and Minoru Pools, built 1958 and 1977
- Minoru Arenas built 1965
- Minoru Sport Pavilion built 1964, valued at \$1.17 million; upgrades \$268,000;
- Minoru Grandstand built 1974

Parkland Allocation



Link