



## General Purposes Committee

Date: Monday, February 18, 2013

Place: Anderson Room  
Richmond City Hall

Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair  
Councillor Chak Au  
Councillor Linda Barnes  
Councillor Derek Dang  
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt  
Councillor Ken Johnston  
Councillor Bill McNulty  
Councillor Linda McPhail  
Councillor Harold Steves

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

### MINUTES

It was moved and seconded

*That the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday, February 12, 2013, be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED**

### FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

1. **BIZLINK – RICHMOND'S BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE**  
(File Ref. No.) (REDMS No. 3785458 v4)

Neonila Lilova, Manager, Economic Development, provided background information, highlighting that BizLink is the City's first business development program. BizLink is comprised of four components: (i) an annual business development campaign; (ii) a cloud-based application that will manage Richmond business accounts; (iii) a business information and access portal; and (iv) a reporting, analysis, and performance measurement tool.

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Ms. Lilova then provided a demonstration of various features found on Richmond's business information and access portal: [www.businessinrichmond.ca](http://www.businessinrichmond.ca).

In reply to queries from Committee, Ms. Lilova provided the following information:

- staff anticipate launching the business and access portal by March 1, 2013;
- BizLink unifies different aspects of Richmond's economic development program;
- access to aggregated information generated on a dashboard is limited as some business data is confidential;
- features found on Richmond's business information and access portal may be of value to the Richmond Chamber of Commerce;
- staff will ensure that the City's customer services standards are met in relation to responding to business inquiries generated through the information and access portal;
- staff anticipate targeting large and small businesses from various industry sectors; and
- staff will report annually on BizLink's performance.

Discussion ensued regarding Richmond's office vacancy rate and it was noted that information regarding what the City's economic development office is doing to address the vacancy rate would be valuable.

It was moved and seconded

*That the staff report titled **BizLink – Richmond's Business Development Initiative**, dated February 6, 2013, and presenting BizLink, Richmond's proactive business retention, expansion, attraction, partnership development and promotional initiative, be received for information.*

**CARRIED**

## **ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**2. PROVINCIAL SALES TAX LEGISLATION IMPACTS TO ALEXANDRA DISTRICT ENERGY UTILITY COMPETITIVENESS**

(File Ref. No. 10-6600-10-01/2012) (REDMS No. 3792821 v5)

Robert Gonzalez, General Manager, Engineering & Public Works, provided background information, noting that the Province of British Columbia will revert back to the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) effective April 1, 2013.

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This change in legislation will create an unequal playing field for energy providers as some energy providers like BC Hydro and FortisBC will receive exemptions and credits, while others like the City of Richmond will not. Staff recommend requesting the Province to implement the PST in a way that will ensure that all energy providers are treated equally.

In reply to queries from Committee, Mr. Gonzalez advised that (i) staff have had initial discussions with representatives of other district energy providers; and (ii) Richmond is unique in that it provides renewable geothermal energy.

Discussion ensued regarding submitting a resolution to the 2013 Union of British Columbia Municipalities convention.

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That a letter be sent to the Premier of the province of British Columbia; the leader of the Official Opposition; the Minister of Finance; with copies to the Minister of Environment, three Richmond MLA's, Expert Panel on BC's Business Tax Competitiveness, UBCM and municipalities operating district energy systems, conveying that:*
  - (a) *the City of Richmond requests that the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) be implemented in a way that will ensure that all energy providers are treated equitably so that they may compete on the basis of their respective system efficiencies, technical merit and carbon emissions;*
  - (b) *this goal be achieved by including provisions in the future PST that will:*
    - (i) *provide for the exemption or the reimbursement of PST charges on energy (gas, electricity) purchased for the purpose of generating energy for resale;*
    - (ii) *make available the former exemption on Production Machinery and Equipment to equipment purchased by district energy systems;*
    - (iii) *maintain, as per the former PST regulation, the PST exemption on the sale of heat to residential district energy customers; and*
- (2) *That staff continue to work with other district energy providers and provincial government officials on measures that will mitigate negative PST impacts to the competitiveness of district energy systems.*

**CARRIED**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved and seconded

*That the meeting adjourn (4:37 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, February 18, 2013.

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Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie  
Chair

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Hanieh Berg  
Committee Clerk