



Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee

Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2009

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Councillor Greg Halsey-Brandt, Vice-Chair
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Ken Johnston
Mayor Malcolm Brodie

Absent: Councillor Bill McNulty

Also Present: Councillor Linda Barnes

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 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee held on Tuesday, October 27, 2009, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

2. Tuesday, January 26, 2010 (tentative date) at 4:00 p.m. in the Anderson Room.

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DELEGATION

3. Frank Claassen, Chairperson, Richmond Arenas Community Association (RACA) accompanied by Mr. Crichy Clarke, Treasurer of the RACA, reviewed a submission from RACA (attached to these as Minutes Schedule 1). Mr. Claassen spoke on the four subjects outlined in the submission: (i) Operations, (ii) Fees and Charges, (iii) Facilities, and (iv) Oval Arena Programming.

With regard to Operations Mr. Claassen mentioned that the steady growth in RACA's operations meant an annual increase in the fees RACA returns to the City to offset the City's arena budget. He added that a surplus for RACA was spent on significant improvements, such as awnings and parking lot improvements.

On the topic of Fees and Charges Mr. Clarke advised that the cost of participating in hockey and other ice sports would increase in the upcoming year due to the cost of the Harmonized Sales Tax as well as cuts to gaming grants. Mr. Clarke requested that consideration be given to the suggestion that the fees RACA submits to the City for 2010 and 2011 be equal to the 2009 level.

With regard to Facilities Mr. Claassen noted that more arenas are needed and he urged the City to undertake long term facility planning. He suggested that the 2010 RACA contribution to the Adjusted City Budget be 90%, but that the City use 80% of that for the budget and use the remaining 10% for arena development.

On the topic of Oval Arena Programming, Mr. Claassen remarked that RACA had hoped to integrate the Oval's ice sheet into RACA's facility utilization system, but that RACA was surprised that the Oval was providing ice programs to the community. He stated that RACA was indirectly competing with the Olympic Oval Corporation. Mr. Claassen added that RACA had met with the Olympic Oval Corporation staff, but that RACA also desired an opportunity to address the Olympic Oval Corporation Board.

Discussion ensued among the delegation, Committee and staff, and in particular on:

- whether the negotiated payment to the City should be increased or held at the 2009 agreed cost of \$2,467,000;
- how City staff and RACA work together;
- RACA's fees are set after City staff undertakes a comprehensive survey of fees in other Lower Mainland municipalities;
- Richmond ice sheets are used by Richmond residents and Richmond-based sports organizations;

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- the impact of RACA's profitability if the organization's contribution to the Adjusted City Budget is capped or reduced;
- whether ice sheet users who cannot afford the fees and charges are subsidized;
- the expensive nature of participating in hockey and the attendant equipment and travel costs;
- whether there is a reserve fund set aside for City facilities, the name of the fund, and if there have been any deposits;
- assessments of City facilities are done on an on-going basis, and early in 2010 staff will present a report on progress made regarding maintaining facilities;
- RACA's contribution goes into the City's regular revenue stream; and
- communication with the Olympic Oval Corporation with regard to programming.

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

It was moved and seconded

That staff review:

- (1) *cost sharing arrangements for arenas between the City and the Richmond Arenas Community Association (RACA);*
- (2) *the fees and charges for arena use;*
- (3) *provisions of assistance to those who cannot afford to participate in programs in arenas;*
- (4) *the need for capital funding for the renewal of ice sheets; and*
- (5) *the relationship between RACA, and other sports groups, and the Olympic Oval Corporation.*

CARRIED

In response to a query from Committee regarding when staff would report back on the referral, advice was given that staff could report back on some parts of the referral as early as the end of January, 2010, and on other parts of the referral thereafter.

(Mayor Brodie left the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and did not return.)

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

4. **PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES MASTER PLAN 2009 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

(Report: November 9, 2009, File Ref. No.: 11-7000-01) (REDMS No. 2755263)

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Vern Jacques, Acting Director, Recreation, remarked that the Master Plan: (i) is a valuable guiding document for the Parks and Recreation Department, (ii) illustrates the breadth of the City's achievements in parks, recreation and cultural programming, (iii) recognizes staff development as well as quality of life improvement, and (iv) provides insight into the number of partnerships that contribute toward making Richmond an appealing and liveable community.

Mr. Jacques presented a photographic slide show that featured highlights from Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services programs.

Discussion ensued between Committee and staff on the following topics:

- the importance (i) establishing and (ii) maintaining mutually satisfying partnerships and relationships throughout the community;
- it is essential to respond to the capacity needs of the City and its residents;
- new publications and new initiatives highlighted in the plan;
- how staff undertakes new initiatives when the need is identified;
- the importance of public consultation when a new initiative is planned;
- Council's stated term goals, funds available, and management's responsibilities are taken into consideration when drafting the Master Plan;
- issues such as the life cycle of facilities, and budget considerations, are brought before Council for resolution;
- the impact of holidays on community centre hours and operations; and
- 2010 is the target year for operating agreements with Community Centres to be finalized.

It was moved and seconded

That the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Master Plan 2009 Annual Progress Report be received for information.

CARRIED

5. **SOUTH ARM COMMUNITY PARK VISION AND MASTER PLAN**

(Report: October 29, 2009, File Ref. No.: 06-2345-20-SARM1) (REDMS No. 2718415)

In response to queries from Committee Serena Lusk Manager, Parks - Planning & Design, and Clarence Sihoe, Park Planner advised that:

- at an open house held at the South Arm Community Centre in January 2008, local residents in attendance did not offer broad support for constructing an artificial turf field within the site, instead expressing concerns such as the removal of green space to accommodate artificial turf;

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- the Garden City drainage canal that runs through the park is part of the City storm water system; discussions are ongoing with regard to beautifying the canal;
- the unusual land-share arrangement with the Richmond School District, and the potential lifespan of the schools on site.

It was moved and seconded

That:

- (1) *the draft South Arm Community Park Vision and Development Plan be endorsed.*
- (2) *staff begin discussions with Richmond School District No. 38 regarding the feasibility of the draft Park Vision and Development Plan, as well as the replacement timetables for Whiteside Elementary and McRoberts Secondary schools.*

CARRIED

6. **PROHIBITION ON THE SALE OF UN-NEUTERED OR UN-SPAYED RABBITS IN PET STORES**

(Report: November 9, 2009, File Ref. No.: 12-8060-20-8524/8556) (REDMS No. 2677165)

The Chair invited Richmond Animal Protection Society (RAPS) representatives to address Committee. Christie Lagally, RAPS Volunteer, and Eric Lagally, RAPS Board Member, circulated a letter to Committee (attached to these Minutes as Schedule 2) and made the following points:

- RAPS supports the proposed bylaw changes to require that all rabbits sold in Richmond pet stores be spayed or neutered;
- it is unlikely that pet stores will spay or neuter rabbits they have for sale as most rabbits sold are under three months old and most rabbits are not old enough to be spayed or neutered until they are between four and six months old;
- spayed or neutered rabbits should be tattooed in the ear at the time of surgery so that abandoned rabbits can be identified as having been spayed or neutered;
- it is likely that abandoned rabbits are from irresponsible owners who obtained their pet from a source, such as a pet store, that does not screen for responsible ownership behaviour;
- even if rabbits are spayed or neutered the problem of rabbit abandonment will persist;
- to truly solve the abandonment problem, a system where rabbits are not sold at all should be adopted; and
- a RAPS petition regarding a ban on the sale of animals at retail outlets of animals within city limits had 1060 signatures.

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Discussion ensued among Committee, the RAPS delegation and Jodie Shebib, Acting Manager, Parks Programs, and in particular regarding:

- the approximate cost of sterilizing a rabbit is \$200; in Richmond the purchase price for a rabbit is between \$50 and \$65, thereby making an added cost of \$200 unattractive to sellers and buyers;
- since the City of Kelowna adopted a bylaw that requires all rabbits for sale be spayed or neutered, Kelowna has had some success in reducing the problem of rabbit abandonment due to pet stores deciding not to sell rabbits; and
- the ban of the sale of rabbits in Richmond should be considered.

(Councillors Linda Barnes and Greg Halsey-Brandt left the meeting and did not return).

Committee heard from two representatives from Vancouver Rabbit Rescue who stated that: (i) the proposed \$100 fine for selling a rabbit that has not been spayed or neutered, as outlined in the proposed bylaw, is a low figure for a fine, and (ii) outright banning of the sale of rabbits is the best solution to the problems of rabbit abandonment.

Committee heard from two representatives from the Richmond retailer PJ's Pets who stated that: (i) a ban on the sale of rabbits may not make a difference to the problem of abandoned rabbits, as buyers will go to another municipality to make their purchase, then bring the rabbit back to their Richmond home, and (ii) PJ's Pets is a responsible supplier of pet rabbits that ensures the issuance of care sheets to rabbit buyers and spends time educating each buyer regarding pet care.

A comment was made that even if rabbit buyers leave Richmond to make their purchase, and bring a pet rabbit back to Richmond, if the City imposed a ban on the retail of pet rabbits, other Lower Mainland municipalities may follow suit.

In response to the Chair's query regarding the enforcement of a potential bylaw that would ban the sale of rabbits, Wayne G. Mercer, Manager, Community Bylaws, advised that enforcement would be done on a case-by-case basis whenever Community Bylaws is made aware of non-adherence to the bylaw.

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

That the report (dated November 9, 2009, from the General Manager, Parks and Recreation) entitled "Prohibition on the Sale of Un-Neutered and Un-Spayed Rabbits in Pet Stores", be referred to staff to bring forward a bylaw that supports the ban of the sale of pet rabbits in Richmond.

The question on the motion was not called as staff was asked to predict when the item would be brought back to Committee for consideration.

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Ms. Shebib advised that the item would be ready for the next meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting, tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 2010.

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

7. **MANAGER'S REPORT**

Alan Cameron, Director, Information Technology reported that the new registration system, CLASS, made its debut at 12 midnight, Tuesday, November 24, 2009, and that the recreation registration was the first internet registration event for the new system. Mr. Cameron noted that Council had approved the upgrade to CLASS, from Bookit, two years ago.

He stated that the event was a success, and that registration was busy, with 2500 registrations occurring in the first hour. That figure represents four to five times the normal amount of internet registration that occurs in the first hour.

Mr. Cameron advised that between 12 midnight and 7 a.m., 4300 registrations had occurred over the internet. The volume resulted in some residents being unable to connect to the website, but IT is to refine the system to improve the experience during the next registration. An Internet Help Desk was staffed from 10:00 p.m. on Monday to 2:00 a.m. on Tuesday to help residents register.

The CLASS project involved collaboration with Community Associations, and Business, Finance, Recreation and IT staff. KPMG reviewed the project, due to the significance of the system to the City and community, and KPMG approved of the project team's decision to go-live.

With regard to whether the CLASS system saves money, the upgrade budget was approved to replace the Bookit system, which the vendor had dropped. Success in this project was achieved by having the new registration system up and running before Bookit retired.

Mr. Cameron concluded by remarking that the City can be assured that it is providing a quality service, and doing more with less.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (5:59 p.m.).

CARRIED

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Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Tuesday, November 24, 2009.

Councillor Harold Steves
Chair

Sheila Johnston
Committee Clerk