

To: Mayor and Council

From: Councillor Harold Steves

Date: October 5, 2015

Re: "Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan"

Awarding an \$881,442 contract for "Design and Construction Services" for the implementation of the plan may be premature.

On March, 2014 staff recommended that the "Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan" be **adopted to guide** the future detailed planning and development of the garden City Lands."

There was a considerable amount of discussion that the plan was not ready to be adopted.

The recommendation was amended to read that the "Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan" "be **endorsed as a guide** for future detailed planning and development of the Garden City Lands."

Subsequently a referral was made to elicit further input and comments prior to finalizing the plan.

It was moved and seconded

"That the Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan be referred back to staff to consider the **comments of committee members** including:

- (1) Forwarding the plan to the **Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee on the Environment, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and other stakeholders** for comments;
- (2) Revising the Plan to reflect a north/south grid orientation; and
- (3) **Investigating the need for the wetland and the expansion of the bog.**

CARRIED

The plan was subsequently revised to reflect a north/south grid orientation.

On May27, 2014, the amended version that the plan **be endorsed** (not adopted) **as a guide for future detailed planning** was approved.

To date it would appear that there has been no request to ACE, the AAC or Kwantlen Polytechnic University, or other stakeholders such as the Garden City Conservation Society for comments on the detailed design of the overall plan.

Furthermore, there has been no report back on the need for the wetland and expanding the bog.

Therefore assigning this contract is premature until the consultations and investigations have been done.

Finally the \$881,442 cost requires much greater detail and analysis.

My Comments on the Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan;

- 1) The perimeter dyke and trail should be straightened to include a laneway for farm equipment and a drainage and irrigation pumping system. Rather than widening the trail into the bog, ditch diggings that have been overcast along the bog edge can be used to improve and elevate the soil in the agricultural area. The only trees should be native Shore Pine.
- 2) The Sanctuary can be part of the bog as shown on the plan or included as part of the farmland. With climate change its' long term use will likely be for urban agriculture.
- 3) The wetland should be included as farmland. A wet area prone to invasive Reed Canary Grass is not an asset and it would be better if the soil was improved for cultivation. A ditch or winding "slough" could be used for drainage from the bog. If drainage occurs through the community hub drainage through the wet area may not be necessary.
- 4) The community hub needs further study, including area reduction, as to any damage to the future agricultural use of that site.
- 5) The orchard should be relocated to higher land, perhaps the Mound. Fruit trees do not like to have their feet wet.
- 6) The mound should be levelled to the same height as the rest of the farmable land.
- 7) Top quality Richmond soil should be mixed with the black organic soil of the farmable area. This will increase height above the water table, improve soil quality similar to what people are accustomed to growing gardens on elsewhere. While crop production can be rewarding it takes special skill to grow crops on Richmonds' organic soils. Soil from the Mound is ideal for this purpose. So is the artificial hill left over from dredging the slough at Terra