

## PUBLIC HEARING ON GARDEN CITY LANDS

Mayor Brodie, City Councilors, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Barbara Tinson and I am speaking today in my capacity as Chair of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce. The Richmond Chamber has been in existence for 82 years and it represents 1200 member companies in our city.

I would like to preface my remarks by stating the issue before us is a complex one with long term ramifications for our city. Therefore, the Board of Directors of the Richmond Chamber has invested a considerable amount of time and effort into researching this issue. There has been a large volume of information provided to the public in the past few months and we found it necessary to consult with a broad group to ensure that an accurate picture of the situation was obtained. We have spoken to city staff, representatives of the Musqueam and the CLC, the provincial government, members of the agricultural community and we have listened to the arguments both for and against the MOU, (and we have endured the last two nights of this public hearing!) It is important to note that the position of the Chamber has therefore not been taken quickly or easily.

The issue before us has been clouded with debate about motherhood issues such as the merits of urban farming and the need for food security. The Chamber understands that, given the option, the majority of Richmond residents would prefer to see the Garden City lands remain 100% green. However, the key phrase here is "given the option". Despite wishful thinking on the part of some, the two options before us are actually quite simple – either we proceed with the MOU and receive half of the lands to use as green space or we lose any claim to the whole parcel. As it has been pointed out many times, Richmond has no legal claim to these lands and we have **already** tried – and failed – to gain possession of the whole parcel.

If I may use an agricultural analogy, which I think is appropriate in this case, think of the Garden City Lands as an apple. We can share the apple with the Musqueam and get half, or we get none. What we cannot have is the whole apple to make apple pie – and we certainly cannot have it with ice cream. It is not on the menu.

The fact that the Musqueam have an interest in these lands has been upheld by the courts and cannot be ignored. All of the scenarios presented for keeping the land in the ALR and for alternate uses of the site fail to provide adequate accommodation for the Musqueam. To suggest that the land should be sold to Richmond at farmland prices is unrealistic as it would provide only a fraction of the income that the Musqueam would receive under the MOU. We expect that the city councilors will act in the best interests of Richmond and certainly the Musqueam expect that Chief Ernie Campbell will act in the best interests of his people as well.

The MOU before us has been negotiated in good faith and represents a landmark agreement between the parties, outside of the treaty process. The Musqueam have generously agreed to share this land with us and to co-operate with the city's official community plan and zoning requirements. This agreement makes us all partners and good neighbours.

The only issue to be decided through this public hearing is whether to proceed with the application to the ALC. We recognize that the ultimate decision to take the land out of the ALR rests with the ALC, not with council, but we urge council to honour the commitment made to the Musqueam when they signed the MOU and allow the application to the ALC to proceed. The Richmond Chamber is convinced that the MOU provides the most certain outcome for Richmond and the best benefits to our community.