

Re: SHORT TERM BORROWING PROPOSAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMUNITY CENTRE ON CAMERON STREET.

Attached is a report from the Parks and Recreation Administrator regarding the construction of the North-East Burnaby Community Centre on Cameron Street. The recommendations in this report refer to the construction of a large air supported gymnasium and the type of short term borrowing that could be initiated to pay for this project.

It will be recalled that Council discussed air inflated structures on March 31, 1976 when Mr. Victor Lipp, President of the Burnaby Tennis Club, presented a brief on a cover for, and management of, six tennis courts in the Burnaby Lake Sports Complex. The Planning Department in past discussions with other departments has expressed concern and objections to the use of such structures for a number of reasons. The Planning Department, however, upon initial review of the report from the Parks and Recreation Administrator, has requested an opportunity to give additional consideration to such structures with the understanding that this further assessment would be based on information obtained from a tour of existing facilities in the other municipalities that are referred to in the Administrator's report, overall environmental and municipal development control criteria and other appropriately related research that would be done on the matter. The Planning Department is also of the opinion that the value of air supported structures may also be more clearly assessed with a visit to conventional urban community centres such as the West End and the Britannia Community Centres in Vancouver.

The further study which the Planning Department wishes to undertake may reaffirm past expressed concerns and objections, or alternatively, may indicate the appropriateness of the use of air supported structures. The results of this study would be ready for referral to Council on April 25, 1977.

The tour of air supported structures on April 14, 1977 and the Planning Department's report on April 25, 1977 should provide Council with more comprehensive information that will be useful for further deliberations on this matter.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT financing for the project be referred to the Municipal Treasurer for a report.
2. THAT Council table the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendations as contained in the Administrator's report, and direct that the recommendations and the report be brought forward for consideration on April 25, 1977.
3. THAT the Parks and Recreation Commission be advised accordingly.

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ITEM 15
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 25
COUNCIL MEETING Apr. 4/77

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER
FROM: PARKS AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATOR
RE: SHORT-TERM BORROWING PROPOSAL FOR
CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMUNITY CENTRE - CAMERON STREET

MARCH 28, 1977
OUR FILE: C84(a)

At a special meeting on the 23rd of March, 1977, the Parks and Recreation Commission considered the 1977 Annual Budget and, in particular, the construction of a community centre on Cameron Street in north-east Burnaby.

BACKGROUND

In both the 1975 and 1976 Referendum By-Laws, the Commission provided funds for the construction of a recreation building in north-east Burnaby. Following two public meetings, it was determined that the first phase of this building should be a community centre. The developers of Burnaby "200" (Harold Winch Village) have provided the amount of \$240,000 to be used towards its construction. The Commission included \$1,000,000 in the 1976 Referendum By-Law for a total of \$1,240,000 exclusive of land costs.

At an estimated cost of \$60.00 (1976 prices) per square foot, the building would consist of up to 20,000 square feet. This did not include a full-sized gymnasium but rather a general purpose room with high ceiling for sports activities, in addition to general purpose space to be provided for social activities.

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1977 PROVISIONAL BUDGET

Following the failure of the second Referendum By-Law, the Commission adjusted the C.I.P. component of the 1977 Provisional Budget by reducing several items and increasing the recommended total to \$1,100,000. This provided \$300,000 from tax levy which, when combined with the deposit from Burnaby "200", provided a total of \$540,000 to commence construction on the community centre. This would have provided approximately 9,000 square feet with some additional benefits to be gained from combining the construction with that of a public library. A centre of less size is difficult to operate economically.

1977 ANNUAL BUDGET

In preparing the 1977 Annual Budget, the Commission considered unit cost estimates recommended by the Chief Building Inspector of \$65.00 per square foot (March 1977 prices), which included construction, site services, site works and consultant fees. When applied to the budgeted amount of \$540,000, this would provide 8,300 square feet. This was 40% of the original 20,000 square feet and below the level that staff felt was required for the successful operation of a community centre of this type. This made it essential for additional construction to be undertaken as soon as possible; that is, in the year 1978 of the five-year plan.

In reviewing the priorities for 1978, it was evident that with tax levy as the only source of funds, the application of an additional \$500,000+ to this project would leave insufficient funds to carry on such basic priority requirements as -

- (1) the development of the Burrard Inlet Marine Park, and
- (2) the most urgent of the Park Land Acquisition Program.

It was determined, therefore, that there was sufficient justification to consider short-term borrowing for the funding of the community centre and, thus, either (a) free tax levy funds for other essential projects, or (b) relieve the tax levy.

- (a) Free tax levy funds for other essential projects -

In reviewing projects which should be recommended in 1977, if the community centre should be funded from short-term borrowing, it was determined that the highest priority went to several projects which proposed the lighting of sports activities. These were the lighting of one lacrosse box, one soccer field, and eleven (11) tennis courts at Central Valley.

These projects have a high priority because the usefulness of existing facilities can be increased by a high percentage at moderate cost. Also, in the lighting of sports facilities, the Commission has established a policy that the work is contingent upon the community organization concerned contributing 25% of the costs. This, in turn, ensures a high level of commitment from the community in terms of using and protecting the facility. The estimated cost of these projects is \$95,000.

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(b) Relieve the tax levy -

In view of the fact that a community centre planning and building construction schedule would not call for any substantial payments to be made until the second quarter of 1978, there would be no requirement to budget for repayment of the loan in 1977.

It would be possible, therefore, to recommend a gross reduction of \$300,000 from the 1977 Provisional Budget which, following consideration of the recommendation for the previously mentioned lighting projects, would result in a net reduction of \$205,000 from the tax levy requirements proposed for the 1977 Annual Budget for parks purposes.

ESTIMATED COSTS OF PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Commission then reviewed the components of the proposed community centre leading to a total square footage that would provide the maximum return for the funds expended. These components were sports, cultural, social activities and service areas, for a total of 16,412 square feet at an estimated cost of \$1,132,428.00. It was noted that one of the deficiencies in this area of Burnaby is that of a full-sized gymnasium. The elementary schools provide only limited activity rooms and, although we are not aware of any confirmed decisions, it is understood that the new school to be built on the Stoney Creek site will be a combined senior-elementary and junior high school and would still not qualify for the full-sized gymnasiums that are available to other communities in Burnaby. A large gymnasium, to provide multiple use, should be approximately 16,000 square feet at an approximate cost of \$1,000,000. However, it was noted that an air-supported structure had recently been constructed at Malaspina College on Vancouver Island at a cost of \$200,0000, which provided 23,790 square feet of space and which was considered optimum for a comprehensive gymnasium program.

All costs are exclusive of land acquisition, funds for which will continue to be budgeted in the 1977 Annual Budget.

PROPOSAL FOR AIR-SUPPORTED STRUCTURE

It was determined that, by combining approximately 16,000 square feet of the originally planned building with the proposal for an air-supported structure similar to the Malaspina model, a comprehensive program of a superior level could be offered to participants at an estimated construction cost of \$1,392,000 which approximates the original budgeted price of \$1,240,000. This proposal includes a 6% inflation factor on the Chief Building Inspector's recommended figures prepared in March 1977 to the anticipated time of construction in March 1978.

In view of the superior floor space and program that can be offered through incorporating an air-supported structure into the recreation complex, the Commission gave more serious consideration to this proposal under the following headings:

(1) Comparative Costs

This point has already been mentioned and there is no question that on this basis an air-supported structure is vastly superior.

(2) Suitability

For the purpose proposed, air-supported structures have long been in use across the entire North American continent. They have proven just as suitable as masonry and other types of buildings for the use proposed.

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(3) Building Standards

Air-supported structures are provided in a form that meets all Canadian Building Standards.

(4) Aesthetics

The Commission acknowledges that this is a purely subjective matter - what one person likes, another person dislikes. There is a majority opinion on the Commission and amongst Parks and Recreation staff that the aesthetics of air-supported structures are as equally acceptable as massive masonry structures. Under certain circumstances of colouring and landscaping, and, for example, when they are lit at night, they can add a dimension to built-up areas which is in no way objectionable. On the question of comparative aesthetics, the Commission is of the opinion that an air-supported structure, properly designed and landscaped, can be far more attractive than, for example, some of the solid, high-rise buildings that are located in the Lougheed area or the massive concrete building in the Municipal complex which houses the Health and Human Resources Departments.

The Commission is definitely of the opinion that an air-supported structure would be much more desirable as an urban component to be observed from the higher levels of high-rise apartment buildings than, for example, the Lougheed parking lot with its acres of black asphalt and parked cars. Also, the Commission is of the opinion that the air-supported structure would be equally as attractive, if not more so, than many of the industrial and commercial buildings which are visible from the high-rise apartments in the Lougheed area.

In summary, the Commission feels that, subjective or not, an air-supported structure is fully acceptable on the basis of aesthetics.

(5) Community Standards

The question was raised at the Commission meeting that past representations from interested persons to construct air-supported buildings in Burnaby have been denied and to permit the Corporation to build one in the face of these denials would be grossly unfair. The Commission would suggest that, at this time, the Council reconsider its position regarding the construction of air-supported structures in Burnaby and that community standards would not be compromised if carefully designed, sited and landscaped air-supported structures were to be considered.

(6) Precedents

To the Commission's knowledge, there are several communities which have permitted such structures without compromising their overall community standards. The success of the enterprises housed within the structures, combined with dissipation of fears of aesthetic incompatibility, have certainly justified these decisions. Such communities are: Vancouver, Richmond, West Vancouver, Oak Bay and Nanaimo.

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(7) Other

One further point of minor significance, but worth considering, is that should unanticipated shifts (in either population or school building programs) occur within the next five years which make the use of an air-supported structure less than viable, the possibility exists of shifting it to some other section of the Municipality where greater cost-benefit and use-benefit returns could be expected.

The building is not to be constructed in anticipation that it will be moved; however, it is an additional factor which adds to the benefits offered by air-supported structures when compared to massive, masonry gymnasias complexes.

The Commission's conclusion is that on all the preceding seven points an air-supported structure can be endorsed, and they would request Council's careful consideration of this matter in association with the current project. In order to obtain an even better understanding of such structures and how they fit into parks and recreation programs and, more significantly, into surrounding residential and other communities, the Commission has set aside Thursday, April 14, 1977, for a tour of air-supported facilities, including Oak Bay, Malaspina College, and one or two lower mainland communities. The Commission extends an invitation to all members of Council to accompany them on this tour and see first-hand the advantages and limitations of air-supported structures.

OPERATING COSTS AND REVENUE

As Council is aware, an increasingly serious problem is the funding of the ongoing operation of new recreation facilities; this was also a point of consideration in the Commission's decision to recommend construction of the entire community centre at one time through short-term borrowing, including an air-supported structure which would provide over 23,000 square feet of gymnasium space. The sports component of this community centre will include racquetball courts, health club (exercise gym, whirlpool and saunas), and a large gymnasium capable of housing indoor tennis and other court games. All of these are extremely popular items in great demand and are revenue producing. The anticipated cost of operating this community centre is \$107,470. The revenue anticipated from the sports oriented facilities is \$83,350. Revenue associated with other programs would cover the cost, or in the case of children's programs part of the cost, of instructors and supplies; and, therefore, are of no significance in terms of offsetting the basic operating and staffing costs of a building.

In view of the budget squeezes that have been in effect for the last three years and the present pressure on the tax levy, the Commission feels that entering into an operation of low net operating costs resulting from high revenues must be in the position adopted more and more by the Corporation, if Burnaby residents are to have the best return on their tax dollars in terms of available recreation opportunities.

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COMBINATION WITH A PUBLIC LIBRARY

Although no final decisions have been taken by the Commission or the Library Board, preliminary staff research would indicate that a community centre/library combination would be very effective, with the sharing of the following facilities:

- entrance foyer and reception
- public washrooms
- mechanical, maintenance and janitorial
- story room (young children)
- general purpose room
- staff room

Discussions on this co-operative venture are continuing.

SUMMARY

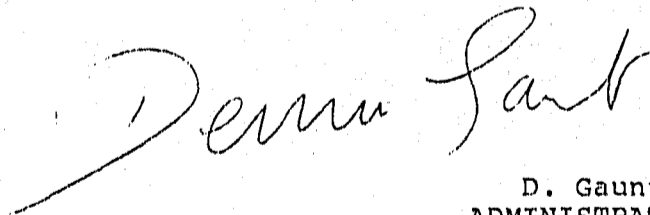
The Commission would recommend to Council that consideration be given to short-term borrowing with repayment over a five-year period for the construction of the community centre on Cameron Street for a core building, of an estimated 16,400 square feet, and an air-supported gymnasium, of 23,790 square feet, for an estimated gross cost of \$1,392,000. From this amount would be deducted the deposit from Burnaby "200", leaving a net requirement for short-term financing of \$1,152,000.

Following Council's approval of the foregoing, the Commission would reduce its proposed 1977 Annual Budget by a sum of \$205,000, being the major portion of funds set aside for the first phase of the community centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council approve the construction of an air-supported gymnasium in conjunction with the north-east Burnaby community centre on Cameron Street.
2. THAT Council provide short-term borrowing repayable over a five-year period for the amount of \$1,152,000 for this project.

Respectfully submitted,



D. Gaunt,
ADMINISTRATOR

DG:lf

cc: MUNICIPAL TREASURER
CHIEF BUILDING INSPECTOR
CHIEF LIBRARIAN
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING