

ITEM 15  
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 28  
COUNCIL MEETING 88/04/18

RE: LETTER FROM MS. ANDREA PENFOLD, #71 - 7455 WOODBROOK PLACE, BURNABY, V5A 4G4  
YOUTH SITUATION AT GREYSTONE PLAZA

MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendation of the Director Planning & Building Inspection be adopted.

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TO: Municipal Manager DATE: 1988 April 12  
FROM: Director Planning & Building Inspection OUR FILE: 17.812  
SUBJECT: Youth Situation at Greystone Plaza

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT copies of this report be forwarded to:

Mr. Bill Dempsey,  
Greystone Merchants,  
1601 Burnwood Dr.,  
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 4H1

and

Ms. Andria Penfold  
#71 - 7455 Woodbrook Place  
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 4G4

SUMMARY

This report was prepared in response to a Council request for information concerning the youth situation at Greystone Plaza, in North East Burnaby. It covers the following:

- existing facilities for youth in North East Burnaby.
- where the youth come from.
- ideas regarding positive solutions to the problem.
- discussion of a possible youth drop in facility at Greystone Plaza as a joint venture between merchants and the municipality.

The report presents preliminary information only. It concludes that staff intend to obtain additional information and develop a recommended strategy for presentation to Council.

#### 1.0 BACKGROUND

On 1988 March 14 Municipal Council reviewed a letter from Mr. Bill Dempsey representing the Greystone Plaza Merchants which identified a number of problems concerning youth at the Plaza. In response to this letter, Council requested staff to prepare a report which addressed the following:

- a) lack of facilities for young people in the N.E. area of Burnaby.
- b) information on where the young people are coming from (i.e., do they live near the Plaza or are they from outside the neighbourhood?)
- c) positive solutions to the problem, with input provided by The Social Planner and RCMP Youth Constable.
- d) the possibility of developing a youth drop in centre at Greystone Plaza as a joint project between the merchants and the municipality.

Following this request from Council, staff from the Planning and Building Inspection Department, in consultation with the RCMP, conducted a preliminary assessment of the situation at Greystone Plaza. The assessment involved visits to the Plaza and discussions with merchants, a local resident, Parks and Recreation staff and others knowledgeable about youth. Our findings and conclusions are presented below.

#### 2.0 EXISTING FACILITIES

At present, few facilities and programs for youth exist in the Greystone Plaza area. The "Youth in Crisis" report, prepared in 1985, revealed that only Stoney Creek Community School provided youth specific services in the North East sector of Burnaby. The only recreation centre serving the North East sector is Cameron, located near the Loughheed Mall. Cameron Centre serves all age groups and primarily offers sports or recreational programming. It does not have staff or facilities devoted exclusively to youth.

Forest Grove School has recreational facilities available to the public. As with Cameron, however, it does not have separate facilities or staff for youth.

Lochdale Community School has experimented with programs for youth, but discontinued them due to low participation.

### 3.0 WHERE DO THE YOUTH COME FROM?

A local resident who was interviewed claims that some of the youths at Greystone live in housing nearby the Plaza. According to the RCMP, several of the youths had formerly frequented the Loughheed Mall area and the Mountainside Village complex on Burnaby Mountain. The youths are believed to have come to Greystone after police pressures caused them to move from these other areas.

Staff will be consulting with the youths in the near future. At that time, staff will be in a better position to determine where the youths live and what their preferences are.

### 4.0 POSITIVE SOLUTIONS

Before identifying potential positive solutions to the "youth problem" at Greystone, it is necessary to determine the nature of the problem to be addressed. On the weekend of 1988 March 18-20, the RCMP sent regular and auxiliary members to Greystone Plaza. They reported no problems occurring there during the weekend. They acknowledge the poor weather may have discouraged the youths from frequenting the area. They will continue to give added attention to the Plaza in order to gain a better understanding of the situation. Merchants and others familiar with Greystone all reported that a youth problem exists in the area. They claimed that the youths congregate in the plaza most evenings, with the numbers reaching 15-20 on weekends. They cited such youth-related problems as vandalism, shoplifting, theft from autos, and intimidation of customers.

All people interviewed claimed that the root of the problem was that the youths are bored and "have nothing to do". They felt that establishment of a youth drop-in or other facility or service would offer the youths a place to go, providing them with a positive alternative to "hanging out" in the plaza.

Staff believe that the idea of a drop in centre in the area has merit. Before proceeding with the idea, however, staff believe a number of questions need to be addressed:

- Is a drop in centre the most appropriate or effective approach?  
For example, detached youth workers may be more effective in addressing the youth situation than a drop-in facility.
- Assuming a drop-in is deemed desirable, who should the centre serve?  
All youths in the area or primarily "problem" youths?  
Youths in the North East sector or from throughout Burnaby?  
Should such a centre only serve youths or other age groups as well?

• What programming should be offered?

The youths presently frequenting the Plaza would not likely be interested in traditional organized recreational programs. They would likely want unstructured, informal programming. Also, they would likely benefit from a youth worker who could gain their trust and help them to develop positive interests and skills.

• From where will the resources be obtained?

The Parks and Recreation Department has no plans to develop a youth facility in or near the Greystone Plaza. Also, the Department has not traditionally provided special staff or facilities for youth. Therefore, if the Department wishes to address the youth situation at Greystone, it would need to revise its budget priorities and change its programming focus to provide youth specific programs. Such actions would need to be approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

As an alternative or complement to having Parks and Recreation employees staff the youth facility, grants could be sought from the Provincial or Federal governments to hire youth workers. The youth worker program could be administered by the Municipality or a non-profit society. An advantage of this option is that the workers could perform a quasi social service/counseling function, which Parks and Recreation staff would have difficulty in doing. The major problems with this option, however, are that grant monies are short term and have been increasingly difficult to obtain due to government restraint. The possibility of obtaining funds from the private sector might also be a viable option.

• Where should a drop-in facility be located?

A suggestion was made at the 1988 March 14 Municipal Council meeting that Greystone Plaza might be a suitable location for a youth drop in centre. This location would be accessible and familiar to area youths. Some merchants have expressed nervousness about having a drop in located in the Plaza, however. They contend that a youth facility in the Plaza may actually increase the youths problem, encouraging more youths to congregate in the area, thereby increasing the potential for trouble.

If a decision is made to establish a drop in, a range of locations (e.g., existing recreation centres, in commercial areas, etc.) should be considered. The centre's target group, programming, and budget should be amongst the key criteria used in selecting a site.

#### 5.0 POTENTIAL LOCATION OF FACILITY AT GREYSTONE PLAZA

As previously indicated, Council requested information on the possibility of establishing a youth drop in centre at Greystone Plaza. They also questioned whether the facility could be a joint project between the merchants and municipality.

Municipal Manager  
re: Youth Situation at Greystone Plaza  
1988 April 12 Page 5

ITEM  
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 15  
COUNCIL MEETING 28 88/04/18

No vacancies presently exist at the Plaza and, as noted, some merchants are not in favour of establishing a drop in there. Greystone is a small plaza with few businesses. While some merchants might support establishing a youth facility at Greystone, it would be unrealistic to expect them to contribute a substantial amount of money towards the facility's operation.

As stated above, such issues as target group, programming, and potential funding sources should be addressed before a decision is made on the location of a youth drop in.

#### 6.0 CONCLUSION

This report has provided a preliminary response to issues raised by Council regarding the youth situation at Greystone Plaza. To adequately address the situation, additional information will be required regarding the nature of the problem, the youths involved, and implications of different options in addressing the problem.

Unless directed otherwise by Council, staff propose to consult with appropriate groups and individuals, including youths and interested citizens, to obtain the additional information required. Staff will consider this information, then present a recommended strategy to Council.

  
A.L. Parr  
DIRECTOR PLANNING &  
BUILDING INSPECTION

JF/pja

cc: O.I.C. Operations R.C.M.P. Burnaby Detachment  
Director Community and Administrative Services  
Director Recreation and Cultural Services

