

RE: GAMING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

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

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER 1988 February 17
FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING INSPECTION Our File: 17.812
SUBJECT: GAMING

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RECOMMENDATION:

THAT this report be received for information purposes.

SUMMARY

Staff have contacted various sources, as directed by Council, regarding their position on the subject of gaming in B.C. Initial contacts have indicated that there is limited information available at this time. Some organizations will be giving further consideration to the topic of gaming in light of our inquiries.

Staff is continuing to pursue the topic, and will report back to Council accordingly.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

At its meeting of 1987 December 14, Council received a brief submitted to the B.C. Gaming Commission by the District of Saanich, regarding the subject of gaming in B.C. In the brief, Saanich expressed particular concern regarding the potential expansion and increase in the number of casinos and commercial bingo parlours in the Province. The topic of gaming as addressed by the Gaming Commission also encompassed ticket lotteries, and destination resort gaming.

Council directed staff to contact the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the Lower Mainland Municipal Association, the Officer-in-Charge of the Burnaby R.C.M.P. and the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council for input, and to determine if any of the organizations had established a position on the subject.

This report provides a summary of the information obtained to date.



2.0 RESPONSES FROM ORGANIZATIONS:

2.1 Union of British Columbia Municipalities

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The U.B.C.M. has not received a resolution from any of its members on the issue of gaming, therefore it has not established a position, or taken anything forward to the Provincial government. The U.B.C.M. will not be pursuing the issue unless a resolution is received from a member Municipality.

2.2 The Lower Mainland Municipal Association

In response to an inquiry from staff, the L.M.M.A. has placed gaming on their agenda as an item of business for their next meeting to be held in 1988 February 25. We anticipate a response from the secretary of the L.M.M.A. following the meeting.

2.3 R.C.M.P.

The concerns expressed by the R.C.M.P. regarding the topic of gaming center on the issue of safeguards and controls necessary to monitor gaming establishments. The O.I.C. Operations also raised the point that the Gaming Control Branch must have a sufficient number of inspectors to ensure strict compliance with regulations or terms of the license.

2.4 Burnaby Inter Agency Council

Staff raised the issue of gaming at a recent meeting of the Inter Agency Council. The main point raised was that many non-profit agencies utilize the proceeds from various types of gaming to supplement their operating costs. Reliance on this type of funding appears to have increased in recent years due to the reduction in Provincial government funding available for social service agencies.

Some I.A. Council members stated that their Boards have had concerns about using gaming as a source of revenue to fund community services.

The Council members adopted the following motion at the meeting, which summarizes their general position:

"The Burnaby Inter Agency Council recognizes that in the current situation, many non-profit societies are by necessity generating revenue by participating in gambling operations, such as casinos and bingos, in order to support the services they deliver. However, we also have concerns about this source of funding for community services because of the potential social problems associated with gambling and the instability of the revenue.

We encourage the Burnaby Council to adopt an approach that protects the current gaming revenue available to our Inter Agency member organizations while working towards stable sources of operating funds for essential community services."

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The Inter Agency Council members have not observed any negative social effects of gaming in their individual client groups under the present system. Nonetheless, they would not support a widespread increase in gaming opportunities.

In order to obtain a greater understanding of the extent to which non-profit agencies rely on proceeds from gaming, and their general position on the subject, staff is currently undertaking a survey of a number of Inter Agency Council members. The results of the survey will be presented in a future report to Municipal Council.

2.5 Simon Fraser University

The Criminology Department at Simon Fraser University is sponsoring a National Symposium on Lotteries and Gambling from 1988 May 26-28.

The symposium will address general subjects such as public policy and law reform, law enforcement, regulatory controls, and the social and economic consequences of expanded levels of gambling activity. Some more specific topics that will be covered in plenary sessions include gaming revenues and non-profit organizations, and political concerns of gambling.

Staff is intending to attend this symposium, and will include any pertinent information in a subsequent report to Council.

3.0 DISCUSSION:

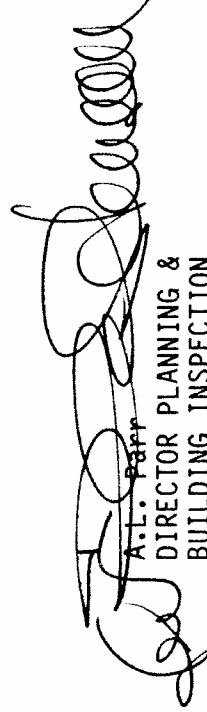
Staff has made initial contacts with a number of organizations to determine their position on the issue of gaming. In response to our inquiry, the L.M.M.A. will be pursuing discussion with its members at a meeting to be held in February 1988.

In discussions with the Burnaby Inter Agency Council, staff became aware that many non-profit agencies utilize the revenue from gaming operations to supplement their operating funding. Staff is undertaking a brief survey of members of the Inter Agency Council to ascertain the extent to which agencies depend upon this source of revenue for their budgetary needs.

The report of the B.C. Gaming Commission has been tabled by the Provincial government. The full report of the Commission is expected to be released at the end of February.

In light of the time needed for responses from the L.M.M.A. and the Inter Agency Council, the forthcoming symposium on lotteries and gambling, and the final report of the B.C. Gaming Commission, staff propose to report back to Council in due course, with a comprehensive overview of the positions of the various organizations on gaming.

This is for the information of Council.


A.L. Parr
DIRECTOR PLANNING &
BUILDING INSPECTION

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DLF/mcb

