

ITEM 5
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 15
COUNCIL MEETING 90/02/26

RE: INFORMATION BURNABY

ACTING MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

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

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER 1990 February 20

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING &
BUILDING INSPECTION

Our File: 00.485

SUBJECT: INFORMATION BURNABY

PURPOSE: To respond to Council's request that the format and content of the Information Burnaby Newsletter be reviewed.

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT this report be received for the information of Council.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 1989 February 27, Municipal Council requested that Planning & Building Inspection Department staff review the format and content of the Information Burnaby bulletin to determine if the existing bulletin could be improved. This report describes actions that have been taken over the last year to improve both the content and the presentation of Information Burnaby.

2.0 ACTIONS TO IMPROVE INFORMATION BURNABY

At the time that Council requested the format and content of the newsletter be reviewed, staff were in the process of undertaking changes to Information Burnaby. The main goal of the changes was to create a bulletin of greater interest and relevance to the audience, in this case, the residents of Burnaby.

To reach this goal, the editor requested articles that are 'shorter and snappier', encouraged the use of graphics and photographs, suggested that articles not be repeated regularly, and solicited articles that were considered to be particularly interesting or topical. In addition, regular features and columns have been added, including "Council Highlights, "Enviro-Note" and the use of a masthead to advise readers of the purpose and publisher of Information Burnaby. Staff has also used an expanded Information Burnaby (i.e. 6 panels) when there has been a desire to run a special feature, for example, "Parking in Metrotown" and the work of Burnaby's Heritage Advisory Committee.

In terms of graphic presentation, the use of desktop publishing has allowed greater latitude in terms of presentation. Wherever possible, a larger and clearer typeface is now used. The use of green for shading and for emphasis has clearly improved the appearance of the bulletin, and has brought the bulletin closer to the Municipality's corporate image.

3.0 OTHER FORMATS CONSIDERED BY STAFF

In reviewing the format of Information Burnaby, staff looked at a variety of news bulletins from other municipalities, corporations and agencies. It was found that the 8.5 x 11 inch four page format was quite typical of bulletins that were produced on a periodic basis. It is felt by the editors of many of these bulletins that this size of document is about right for people to read, and that the format provides a strong identification between the bulletin and its publisher.

Staff also looked at the possibility of using a tabloid format. This format has been used for two previous editions of Information Burnaby: the "Small Lot" and the "Environment Week" editions. The benefits of this format include its slightly lower cost for printing, and the larger space available for information. The disadvantages include the poorer reproduction quality of newsprint, especially for photographs and the fact that many people consider publications in the tabloid format as "junk mail".

Staff felt that there is a strong and long standing association between the bulletin-type format of Information Burnaby and the Municipality. People readily recognize Information Burnaby, a recognition that staff feel has been strengthened by the recent changes to the bulletin. In addition, staff has been pleased with the ability to expand the size of Information Burnaby, where warranted, that is offered by the bulletin format. However, staff feel that there is merit in reserving the tabloid format for special editions of Information Burnaby so that they stand out from the periodic issues.

4.0 REACTION TO CHANGES TO INFORMATION BURNABY

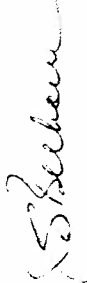
The changes to Information Burnaby described above have been introduced on an incremental basis over the last three issues. The editor has attempted, in an informal way, to monitor reactions to these changes. Since the editor's name is included in the masthead, many readers are taking the time to direct comments to the editor. To date, all comments have been very positive, with many readers offering innovative ideas for future articles. Specifically, appreciation has been expressed for the use of recycled paper, and for the overall readability of the bulletin.

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It is apparent that the bulletin is being read. For example, the 1990 February issue introduced the Municipality's touch tone phone information line. After distribution of the bulletin, the phone number published was phoned 1,628 times in the first week. Similarly, an article advertising the availability of a free guide for senior citizens resulted in about 400 requests for this guide being made over two days.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Staff are of the opinion that the recent changes made to Information Burnaby have reinforced the purpose of the bulletin to communicate information about the Municipality to all residents of Burnaby. Staff feel that it is important that the current association between Information Burnaby and the Municipality be maintained through the improvement of the existing format, rather than the creation of a new format and image. Unless otherwise directed by Council, staff will continue to monitor public comments about Information Burnaby and will strive to make improvements as necessary.


A.L. Parr
DIRECTOR PLANNING &
BUILDING INSPECTION


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