

REPORT
1993 April 13

CITY OF BURNABY

FAMILY COURT AND YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

Re: Annual Report - 1992

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be sent to Mr. Rene De Vos, Policy Program Analyst, Policy & Program Services Division, Ministry of Attorney General, 5th Floor, 910 Government Street, Victoria, B.C., V8V 1X4.

R E P O R T

January, February and March

The Burnaby Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (hereinafter known as the "Committee") at its meeting held in February discussed the issue of implementation of a New Public Defender System to replace the present model of delivery of legal services to people eligible for legal aid. The Committee reviewed correspondence that had been written to the Attorney General, Honourable Colin Gablemann on the subject.

Arising from the discussion, the Committee expressed a concern that this system is being implemented without any public consultation process. The Committee agreed to forward a letter to the Attorney General's office expressing concern that the Public Defender System is being considered and has not been well publicized and that no public hearings or informational meetings have been held for the public to express its views before any change in the present system is implemented.

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The Committee received Mr. Dave Keillor who elaborated on the cancellation of the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) in Burnaby. VORP was unable to get enough referrals from appropriate sources to be able to make the program work. Mr. Keillor advised that the office is waiting for VORP to come back with new strategies and initiatives for this program.

It was suggested that the Committee hold a public information meeting concerning family violence in the North Burnaby area in the spring of 1992. The format would highlight background information, what services are available from the legal support side when violence occurs and preventive measures.

The Committee was informed by the Burnaby Family Life Institute that a Family Violence Conference would be held on 1992 April 9. The conference workshop was directed to professionals in the field of family violence.

In regards to the Family Court/Youth Justice Committee Provincial Conference to be held 1992 October 23 - 25 the Committee provided input concerning a request for suggestions with respect to the upcoming Conference. The members expressed a desire to attend the Conference.

Discussion ensued on organizational issues regarding the upcoming Public Information Meeting on Family Violence (1992 April 29). It was decided that the following would be invited:

Burnaby Family Life Institute
R.C.M.P.
Crown Counsel
Battered Women's Support Services
Life Line Society
Family Court Counseling
Burnaby Mental Health

April, May and June

A report was forwarded to Council advising that the Fraser Regional Justice Initiative Society had suspended the Victim Offender's Reconciliation Program indefinitely.

The Information Meeting on Family Violence was held on 1992 April 29 of which a complete set of minutes documented the evening's proceedings.

The Committee was advised by the Attorney General that Mr. Tim Agg had been appointed to conduct a review of legal aid services in B.C. The review is the result of the concern of the Government over both the cost of legal aid services and concern over the accessibility ranges and quality of services throughout the Province.

Mr. Agg announces in this letter that he would be traveling to a number of communities throughout B.C. in late April and May. Local arrangements are being made in cooperation with local offices of the Legal Services Society, community law offices and Native Community Law Offices.

An evaluation of the Burnaby Family Court and Youth Justice Committee's Public Information Meeting on Family Violence took place. The Committee stated that the forum was excellent and effective.

Arising from the discussion there was concern expressed it was not clearly defined to the public that once charges are implemented that it is really out of the complainant's hands; the criminal process is invoked and they have little or no control once started.

It was suggested that a preventative step might be an idea for implementation before charges are invoked, such as an ex-party order from a Justice of the Peace under the Family Relations Act, which would bar the assaulting person from contact (does not result in charges). Party can apply later on without the Crown being involved. The Committee decided to invite Wendy McLellan, reporter from the Province newspaper inviting her to attend the June meeting of the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee to address the articles she wrote for the Vancouver Sun on family violence.

In June Wendy McLellan reporter appeared before the Committee to share the information she acquired during her study on family violence. It was suggested that the Committee look into the Duluth model that is being used in London, Ontario where everyone in the community cooperates when a woman has been abused. It was stated that women who leave their home after being abused need protective measures and that at the present time there is a large loop-hole in the system. A woman needs affordable rent, daycare, time to recoup and educational opportunities. The Committee would like to consider dealing with this whole notion in a different way instead of the adversarial system. Considerable discussion ensued on whether the community should be directing resources towards a curative therapeutic approach or funnel resources into policing.

The Committee suggested that representatives from Burnaby Family Life Institute and the Superintendent from School District #41 be invited to attend the September meeting of the Committee to discuss from their perspective possible awareness programs that could be implemented concerning family violence.

September, October and November

The Committee received two delegations on the subject of family violence in the school system. Dr. Froese, Superintendent, School District #41 advised that a significant problem encountered in the system is the problem of the values of the different cultures. The punishment values that are upheld in the home are not what is practiced in the school system. The process is not simple. As far as how it is dealt with in the school system, he advised that there is not much in the way of lessons, but there are a significant amount of people involved in a substantial commitment to the problem. Some of the resources that come into play in family violence within the school system are: youth directory used as a referral reference, community health nurses, social service and family life programs and your counselors. There is a care kit which deals with assertiveness training.

In response to the issue of how the Committee can address this within the school system, it was suggested that joint meetings occur with other Committees with a prearranged agenda and that this Committee meet with Parks and Recreation staff and elected representatives.

Jeanne Fike gave a presentation on Family Violence, Prevention in the Nineties. The speaker advised that the Burnaby Inter-Agency Task Force on Family Violence have recommended a new name for their Committee which is "Violence is Never Acceptable Community Coordinators Committee". The speaker challenges Burnaby to become a violence-free zone.

The Committee agreed to submit a resolution at the Family Court/Youth Justice Committee Provincial Conference. The resolution read:

WHEREAS we appreciate the identification of the six themes resulting from the eighteen workshops during the consultation phase of the Family Justice Review Project under the auspices of the Attorney General's office and;

WHEREAS without the financial commitment, the efforts of the working groups for this project would be meaningless and;

THEREFORE, we urge the Provincial Government to support the recommendations of this Committee by providing an appropriate level of funding to implement recommendations consistent of the six themes."

The Committee agreed to exchange minutes with the organization called VINA (Violence is Never Acceptable). The exchange would only be on minutes pertaining to family violence issues.

The Chair of the Family Court/Youth Justice Committee attended the Family Court Conference that was held in West Vancouver on 1993 October 23 to 25. Twenty-six Family Court Committees were represented at the Conference. The topic was Youth Violence. The Resolution's Committee will be forwarding a report to all Family Court Committees outlining the results of that Committee's discussion. The next Family Court Conference will be held in Terrace, B.C.

The Family Court Committee in addressing the Firearm's Amnesty Program for the month of November whereby firearm owners may turn in guns and illegal weapons as well as ammunition and explosives without fear of prosecution for possession; recommended that Council support the Firearm's Amnesty Program by encouraging firearm owners in Burnaby to turn in guns and illegal weapons as well as ammunition and explosives to the local Firearms Registrar of the R.C.M.P.

The Committee agreed that a letter to the editors of Burnaby Now, Tri-City News, the Sun and Province be forwarded informing them that the Burnaby Family Court and Youth Justice Committee support the endorsement of the Honourable Kim Campbell, for the Firearms Amnesty, 1992 November 01 to 30. It was also requested that a form letter be sent to Burnaby High Schools, community centers and sporting goods stores advising of the Firearms Amnesty Program in November. The letter announced support for such an Amnesty program in Burnaby. All B.C. Family Court and Youth Justice Committees were forwarded correspondence requesting their support for the Firearms Amnesty Program. A letter of support of the Firearms Amnesty Program was sent to all the Burnaby High Schools, community centers and sporting goods stores.

Respectfully submitted,

L. Baker
Chair

Councillor D. Lawson
Member

