

CITY OF BURNABY

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

RE: "STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING
IN B.C." CONSULTATION PAPER

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council be requested to send a copy of this report to SPARC of B.C., along with a letter of support for the recommendations contained in the consultation paper, "Strengthening Community Social Planning in B.C.".

R E P O R T

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 1994 January 26 received and adopted the attached staff report providing information on and recommending endorsement of the SPARC consultation paper, "Strengthening Community Social Planning in B.C.".

The Committee therefore submits the report for Council's endorsement.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor J. Young
Acting Chair

: COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIR. ADMIN. & COMM. SERV.
- DIRECTOR FINANCE
- DIR. PLNG. AND BLDG.
- CITY SOLICITOR

Councillor C. Redman
Member

TO: COMMUNITY ISSUES &
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

1993 JANUARY 19

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

OUR FILE: 17.315

SUBJECT: **"STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SOCIAL
PLANNING IN B.C." CONSULTATION PAPER**

PURPOSE: To provide information on and recommend endorsement of the SPARC consultation paper, "Strengthening Community Social Planning in B.C.".

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council be requested to send a copy of this report to SPARC of B.C., along with a letter of support for the recommendations contained in the consultation paper, "Strengthening Community Social Planning in B.C.".

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

With the agenda of its 1993 October 27 meeting, the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee (CISPC) received a copy of "Strengthening Social Planning in B.C.," a consultation paper prepared by the Social Planning & Research Council (SPARC) of B.C.. The CISPC acknowledged the importance of the paper, agreeing it deserved careful attention from the Committee. It expressed concern, however, with the late November deadline that SPARC had imposed for comments. The CISPC therefore passed the following motion:

THAT staff prepare a report on the Consultation Paper as submitted by the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. to inform the parties as to the procedures the Committee is undertaking and what the circumstances are with respect to the timeline.

City Council also received a copy of the consultation paper with its 1993 November 8 agenda and was informed that a report on the matter would be forthcoming from the CISPC.

Subsequent to the paper being forwarded to the CISPC and Council, SPARC extended the deadline for comments to 1994 February. The extension was in response to requests from several municipalities and other groups for additional time to review and respond to the paper.

This report provides an overview of the SPARC consultation paper and assesses it, from a Burnaby perspective.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF SPARC PAPER

The SPARC paper examines the state of social planning in the province and offers six recommendations for improving B.C.'s social planning framework. The paper was prepared by a working group consisting of representatives of SPARC, the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the Planning Institute of B.C., the Social Issues Committee of the GVRD, and the Chilliwack and North Okanagan Social Planning Councils. It was prepared in response to a request from the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Honourable Robin Blencoe.

The key conclusions of the paper are as follows:

- Over 30 communities responding to a SPARC survey indicated that they perform social planning functions, either through their municipal governments or community social planning councils.
- The following roles and functions characterize community social planning in the province: social needs assessment, policy analysis and development, community planning, community development, service coordination, monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, and collaboration.
- The following bodies assume leadership roles for community social planning in B.C.: municipal councils and regional districts, community groups, community social planning councils, inter-agency committees, community service agencies, and Provincial organizations (e.g. SPARC).
- The main barriers facing community social planning in B.C. are:
 - ***lack of legal mandate***: the Municipal Act does not specifically refer to social planning; therefore, questions exist as to how much or what type of social planning municipalities can or should do.

- **fear of downloading:** confusion often exists about the difference between social planning and social service delivery; also, there is concern that if municipalities identify needs through social planning efforts, they will be expected to assume responsibility for addressing those needs.
- **lack of resources:** many municipalities, especially those in smaller communities outside the Lower Mainland, lack the resources to undertake social planning activities.
- Responsibility for developing and funding social programs primarily rests with the Provincial and Federal Governments; however, local jurisdictions are charged with much of the responsibility for planning and managing the services.
- The consultation paper cites seven reasons for striving to strengthen community social planning:
 - i) to provide those involved with community social planning with authority to "get on with the job"
 - ii) to ensure equitable access to social planning resources throughout the province
 - iii) to manage social programs on a coordinated basis
 - iv) to integrate Provincial initiatives through community social planning arrangements
 - v) to help communities manage change on a planned basis
 - vi) to meet community expectations of resolving their own social issues
 - vii) to enable communities to plan for needed amenities and services.
- The paper recommends that the Province strengthen the social planning framework in B.C. by
 - i) amending the Municipal Act to recognize and legitimize municipalities' authority to conduct social planning
 - ii) amending the Municipal Act to give authority to municipal councils to include social planning, social amenities, and community service facilities in their grant aid, land lease and public facility programs
 - iii) preparing a guide on community social planning to help municipalities and community organizations in undertaking community social planning activities
 - iv) developing a program to provide information, training, and other support to help municipalities and community organizations with their social planning endeavours

- v) introducing a community grants program to provide resources to local communities wishing to undertake social planning initiatives
- vi) developing a provincial strategy to address social planning concerns on a province-wide basis.

(A complete list of the consultation paper's recommendations is contained in Appendix 1, *attached*).

3.0 COMMENTS ON PAPER

The SPARC consultation paper is comprehensive and timely. It identifies key issues facing community social planning in the province and presents sound recommendations for strengthening B.C.'s community social planning framework.

In considering the paper from a Burnaby perspective, staff would offer the following comments:

3.1 GENERAL COMMENTS

- a) The consultation paper's recommendations are intended to have general applicability throughout the province, addressing the needs both of large urban municipalities and smaller outlying communities. Also, the recommendations are intended to apply to all groups conducting community social planning - not only municipal governments. In assessing the consultation paper, the general applicability of the recommendations must be kept in mind. For example, Burnaby staff may have chosen slightly different wording or emphasis for some of the recommendations. We may also have reiterated Council's 1991 UBCM resolution that municipalities be authorized to collect development cost charges for social amenities. While possibly gaining support from various Lower Mainland municipalities, such an approach may be seen to reflect the "big city" viewpoint, thereby alienating smaller communities in the province. Given the diversity of communities and social planning bodies in B.C., and the importance of presenting a widely supported position to the Province, the focus and tone of the SPARC recommendations is considered appropriate.
- b) The thrust of the paper's recommendations is to *enable and support* local jurisdictions in undertaking social planning rather than prescribing that they do so. This approach is considered appropriate, given that different communities have varying needs, circumstances, and capacities to pursue social planning activities.

- c) The consultation paper and its recommendations clearly distinguish between social planning and service delivery. The distinction is necessary and appropriate. Currently, one of the major concerns of local governments is downloading of responsibilities by senior governments. While local communities are in the best position to identify and plan for their needs, they lack the resources and mandate to assume major funding responsibility for social programs.

3.2 SPECIFIC COMMENTS

- a) Burnaby and other municipalities are already doing some of the things being proposed in the consultation paper. For example, the City has a recognized social planning function and goals, as articulated in the Official Community Plan. We have the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee, which serves as Council's advisory body on social planning matters. Also, the City provides community grants, office space, and property tax exemptions for various non-profit community service organizations. The Solicitor advises that while the City has the authority to do these things under existing legislation, there is no objection to these powers being clearly specified in the Municipal Act.

The Municipal Act amendments proposed in Recommendations 1 and 2 of the consultation paper would confirm that social planning, like land use planning, is a legitimate activity for B.C. municipalities. They may also lead to increased social planning activity in the province - especially in smaller communities. Staff therefore believe that the proposed amendments deserve support.

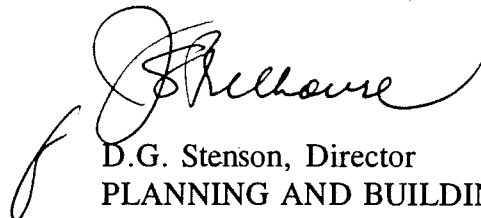
- b) The proposed community social planning guide, social planning assistance program, community grants program, and Provincial social planning strategy (Recommendations 3, 4, 5, and 6) would be welcome. They would provide necessary resources and support to enable municipalities and community organizations to undertake social planning at the local level. They would also demonstrate the Provincial Government's commitment to support community social planning. Again, if these recommendations were acted upon, the assumption is that they would enhance local communities' abilities to conduct social planning. Primary funding responsibility for social service delivery would continue to rest with the senior governments.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The "Strengthening Community Social Planning in B.C." consultation paper is a timely and important document. Its recommendations address three of the key challenges facing communities engaged in social planning: lack of clarity concerning legal mandate, fear of downloading, and lack of resources. If enacted, the recommendations could enhance the ability of Burnaby and other communities throughout the province to conduct social planning.

Burnaby has a fairly well established social planning structure which includes the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee, designated City Social Planning staff, the Inter-Agency Council, and numerous other professional and community-based groups dealing with social issues. Despite its relative sophistication, the City's social planning structure could benefit from the recommendations contained in the SPARC consultation paper. Through improved social planning, the citizens of Burnaby would also benefit.

It is therefore recommended that Council be requested to send a letter of endorsement for the consultation paper's recommendations, along with a copy of this report, to SPARC of B.C..


D.G. Stenson, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JF\jp

Attachment

cc: City Manager
Director Administrative & Community Services
Director Finance
City Solicitor

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM

"STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING IN B.C."

1. Amend the Municipal Act to recognise the authority and responsibility municipalities have for considering social issues, and to specify some powers relating to social planning as a legitimate activity for municipal government.
 - i) Add to the description of community plans (Section 945) the inclusion of social objectives in Official Community Plans.
 - ii) Add to the "content of community plans" (Section 945) a provision stating that community plans may include social plans, social planning guidelines and provisions for the protection of and inclusion of social amenities.
 - (iii) Add a new section enabling municipalities and regional districts to establish by bylaw a Social Planning Advisory Body. This section should allow existing social planning committees, boards and commissions to be recognised, and should allow for recognition of the advisory role of local Community Social Planning Councils.
 - (iv) Add a new Section 697 on Social Planning, stating that councils and boards may, by bylaw, establish social planning regulations and policies to further the well-being of the community and address the social needs of its citizens.

2. Amend the Municipal Act to give authority to municipal councils and regional boards to include social planning, social amenities and community service facilities in their grant aid, land lease and public facility programs, by:
 - (i) At Sections 679, 682 and 788, give authority for municipalities and regional districts to own, operate and lease community service facilities, and for such facilities to be included in other public buildings.
 - (ii) At Section 269 and 400, social planning and community services should be added as allowed recipients of grant aid and tax exemptions by local governments.

3. Produce a Community Social Planning Guide to assist municipalities and community organisations in developing social planning in their communities. The Guide could be produced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in conjunction with SPARC, to help communities make use of provincial resources and powers for social planning. Similar to the Guide supporting legislation on affordable housing (Affordable Housing Builds Strong Communities), the Social Planning Guide should:

- Provide information on social planning methods and activities.
 - Outline various ways to deal with social issues and improve the social effectiveness of municipal regulations.
 - Illustrate how social planning can be used in different community settings.
 - Assist with interpreting legislation and developing policy.
 - Outline how social planning bodies and functions can be initiated.
4. Develop a Social Planning Assistance Program to facilitate and encourage social planning at the local level. Similar to contracted arrangements for public education and assistance with child care initiatives, the Program would provide on-going, province-wide information and training to communities for them to develop the social planning structures, skills and initiatives most relevant to their needs.
 5. Introduce a Community Grants Program to provide resources directly to local communities wishing to set up social planning initiatives. This program would help with start up and operating costs for community social planning organisations or for social planning initiatives. This would complement the existing planning grant program for municipal social planning studies.
 6. Develop a provincial Social Planning Strategy for B.C. on an integrated, inter-ministerial basis, combining government and community interests to address social planning for the province as a whole. This could act as the social component of the Provincial Government's Strategic Plan, currently being developed by the Cabinet Planning Secretariat.

