

CITY OF BURNABY

FAMILY COURT AND YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: ANNUAL REPORT - 1997

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the Office of the Attorney General, Room 232, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4.

REPORT

The Revised Statutes of British Columbia 1979, Chapter 341, "*Provincial Court Act*" - Section 4(4)(c) provides as follows:

4. (4) The Family Court Committee shall  
(c) report annually to the municipalities and to the Attorney General respecting their activities during the past year.

In compliance with this statutory requirement, contained hereunder is a summary of activities of the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee during 1997.

1997 CONFERENCE OF B.C. FAMILY COURT & YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEES

Three members of the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee attended the 1997 Conference of B.C. Family Court and Youth Justice Committees held in North Vancouver from 1997 November 07 - 09. Conference highlights included presentations regarding domestic violence issues and the provincial court system and workshops regarding restorative justice, court watch programs and the importance of early intervention. It was an excellent opportunity for Committees across the province to network and discuss alternative methods of dealing with issues facing youth.

: COPY - CITY MANAGER

BURNABY YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAM

The Family Court and Youth Justice Committee and the Community Issues and Social Planning Committee held a joint meeting in 1997 September to discuss the status of the Burnaby Youth Services Program, a juvenile crime prevention program affiliated with the R.C.M.P. The two Committees confirmed their strong support for Youth Services, reiterating their belief that the program warrants Provincial Government funding support. The key points which emerged from the meeting were as follows:

- Burnaby Youth Services is valuable prevention and early intervention program, providing counselling for young offenders and their families, significantly reducing the chances that the youths will re-offend; the program also provides a positive option for police officers, allowing them to use their discretion in diverting youths from the criminal justice system
- Recidivism checks reveal a strong success rate for Youth Services, with well below 10% of the youths being charged for further offenses after having been through the program
- With termination of the Canada Assistance Plan, the City has assumed 100% of the funding for Youth Services in 1997, compared to a 70% share in 1996
- The staff complement of Burnaby Youth Services remains the same now as when the program was initiated in 1974, while the population during the period has increased by over 50,000 and the complexities of the issues being addressed have grown dramatically
- Burnaby Youth Services accepts referrals from the police and community (e.g., self-referrals, schools). Given insufficient staff resources and the need to set priorities, the program has taken various steps over the years to restrict eligibility to its services. The most recent change involved a decision to stop accepting community referrals for youths aged 15 to 17 years. Youth Services now limits community referrals to 9 to 14 year olds; however, it continues to accept referrals from the police for youths aged between 9 and 17.

Given, the abovenoted information, the two committees forwarded a letter to the Attorney General of B.C. strongly recommending that he consult with the Minister for Children and Families to provide sufficient funding to enable Burnaby Youth Services to establish an additional full time counsellor position.

CHILD AND YOUTH PROSTITUTION

The Family Court and Youth Justice Committee is represented on a City of Burnaby task force addressing the sexual exploitation of children and youth. The task force is reviewing a number of critical areas including education and prevention, crisis intervention, law enforcement and review, and follow-up and support for children and youth leaving the sex trade. The Family Court and Youth Justice Committee believes that child and youth prostitutes should be treated as victims of sexual abuse rather than young offenders or criminals. They should be protected, not punished.

HOURS OF OPERATION AT BURNABY POOL HALLS

At the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee meeting held in 1997 February, Constables Stephane Brossard and Ward Lymburner, Burnaby R.C.M.P. Detachment, outlined youth gang activities in Burnaby. The constables advised that gang members congregate at particular pool halls in Burnaby which are open 24 hours a day. The constables further advised that gang violence at the pool halls usually occurs between midnight and 2 a.m. The R.C.M.P. officers concluded by indicating that the majority of these gang members do not appear to be Burnaby residents. Arising from discussion, the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee recommended that Council give consideration to restricting the hours of operation at pool halls open 24 hours a day where problems arise in late evening hours.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Judge Thomas Gove appeared before members of the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee to outline the structure of the provincial court system. Judge Gove advised that case conferencing is an effective method of handling youth matters. Judge Gove further advised that he attempts to handle youth matters in an expeditious manner, preferably within 90 days. Judge Gove concluded by advising that additional judges are required for case conferencing and to ensure that cases, in particular youth cases, are handled expeditiously.

Ms. Angela Horlick and Ms. Tara Johnson, Burnaby Youth Connection, appeared before members of the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee to outline services offered by the organization. The speakers advised that Crime Prevention Information Centres have been established for the public to access information and inquire about community safety issues. The speakers further advised that bike squad crime watch patrols operate from each of the centres. The speakers noted that a Business Crime Reduction Services group has been established to assist the business community by offering free security checks. The delegation also noted that another focus of the Burnaby Youth Connection is to identify and meet crime prevention and safety needs of senior citizens in the community.

Respectfully submitted,

Allen Hutton  
Chair

Alison Joe  
Vice Chair

Councillor C. Redman  
Member

