

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: USE OF PORTABLES FOR CHILD CARE PURPOSES

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council received the attached report for information purposes.

R E P O R T

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee at its Open meeting held on 2000 March 22 received and adopted the attached report responding to the Committee's request for more information about the possible use of surplus school portables for child care purposes.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston
Chair

Councillor N. Harris
Vice Chair

<p>: COPY - CITY MANAGER - DIR. PLNG. & BLDG. - DIR. PARKS, REC. & CULT. SERV.</p>
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TO: CHAIR & MEMBERS
COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

2000 March 13

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

Our File: 17.811

SUBJECT: USE OF PORTABLES FOR CHILD CARE PURPOSES

PURPOSE: To respond to the Committee's request for more information about the possible use of surplus school portables for child care purposes.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information purposes.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 2000 January 26, in considering a report concerning the *Building a Better Future for BC's Kids* discussion paper, the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee (CISPC) requested further information concerning the use of surplus school portables for child care purposes. This report responds to that request.

2.0 PROVINCIAL PROPOSAL

One of the proposals contained in the *Building a Better Future for BC's Kids* discussion paper was that surplus school portables be converted for use for school age child care programs. The rationale was that, through the Ministry of Education's Portable Reduction Strategy, about 1600 portables would be declared surplus over the next four years in BC. Roughly 1200 were expected to be in adequate shape to be converted for child care use.

The discussion paper suggested that the conversion of 500 portables for child care use would translate into an additional 10,000 child care spaces - twice the number currently existing on school sites in the province. It estimated that the capital cost of the conversion would be about \$27 million over four years, with an ongoing annual cost of \$3 million.

3.0 EXISTING CITY POLICY

Under the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw, portables are regarded as “temporary buildings.” Applicants wishing to establish temporary buildings are required to apply to the Building Department for a permit. The permits are valid for six months and may be renewed for one six month extension. If applicants wish to use a portable for more than a year, they are required to seek approval through the Board of Variance.

While not a specific requirement of the Zoning Bylaw, the City also requests that applicants apply for a Preliminary Plan Approval (PPA) for portables to be used for child care purposes. Through the PPA process, the City is able to do a more thorough review of the proposals, ensuring that they meet relevant Zoning Bylaw requirements, are appropriately sited, and are generally compatible with the surrounding area.

4.0 SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY

The School District has published a document entitled *Procedure to Request Placement of a Portable/ Modular Building on a School Site* (see Appendix 1, *attached*). In essence, the District views proposals for locating portables or modular child care facilities on school grounds on a case by case basis. The key criterion used in the screening process is that the facilities not jeopardize the school’s instructional program, student safety, or community recreation programs.

For the Committee’s information, the School District currently accommodates 17 child care programs, providing a total of 378 licensed spaces, either on its grounds or in its buildings. The breakdown is as follows:

- 10 programs in modular or portable buildings on school grounds
- 1 in dedicated space within a school
- 3 in shared space within a school
- 3 in dedicated space in non-operating school buildings.

5.0 DISCUSSION

Through policy and practice, the City and School District have demonstrated a willingness and commitment to facilitating a range of affordable child care options in Burnaby. That said, both parties recognize that the option of using school portables for child care purposes presents several challenges, including:

- the physical quality of the portables (i.e., after being used for school purposes, the portables are often in poor condition)
- aesthetic value (i.e., portables are designed to accommodate school classes on a temporary basis and in an economical manner; they are not designed to be sensitive to, or compatible with, the school site or surrounding neighbourhood)
- functionality (i.e., the portables are long and rectangular and do not easily lend themselves to programming for child care purposes; unless joined with other portables, they may be too small to accommodate a financially viable number of children; also, they are not equipped with washrooms).

With respect to the latter point, Regional Community Care Facility Licensing (CCFL) officials express concern about the safety aspects of children having to leave a portable to use washroom facilities in a school. Before issuing a license, CCFL officials would require assurances that these and other health and safety concerns could be satisfactorily addressed. Also, for surplus school portables, they would only consider licensing child care programs targeted at school age children, not for those of preschool age.

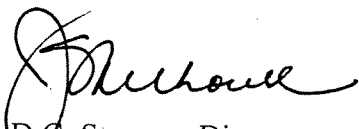
6.0 CONCLUSION

This report has responded to the CISPC's request for further information on the question of using surplus school portables for child care purposes. It indicated that the use of portables for child care would be consistent with bylaws and policies of the City and School District - provided certain conditions were met. It also indicated that the Health Region would consider licensing programs for school age children run from portables - provided that the health, safety, and other requirements of the CCFL Child Care Regulation could be satisfied.

In closing, it should be acknowledged that surplus school portables may provide a relatively inexpensive option for increasing the supply of child care spaces, both in Burnaby and BC. That said, the portables have many drawbacks and cannot be considered an ideal environment for child care programming - particularly on a long term basis. Before launching a Province-wide initiative to use surplus school portables for child care, many issues would need to be resolved. To assist with the effort, it is believed that the Provincial Government should consult widely with representatives of municipalities, school districts, parent groups, and other stakeholders.

In the meantime, City staff will consider applications to establish child care in portables on a case by case basis, and in consultation with officials from the School District and CCF Licensing.

This report is provided for the Committee's information.


D.G. Stenson, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JF\sa

Attachment

cc: City Manager
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

PROCEDURE TO REQUEST PLACEMENT OF A PORTABLE/MODULAR BUILDING ON A SCHOOL SITE

Step I

A request in writing is submitted to the school district's Youth and Community Services Department requesting a preliminary study to determine the feasibility of placing a portable/modular building or converting a space within the school for a childcare program.

Upon receipt of the request, the Youth and Community Services Department will convene a meeting of the Secretary-Treasurer, Director of Facilities Services and the Assistant Superintendent responsible for the school to initiate the feasibility study.

Step II

If the preliminary study determines that a portable/modular building can be placed on the school site or that there is a space within the school that can be converted for childcare, then a formal proposal is developed by the operator and is submitted to the school district's Secretary-Treasurer. This proposal should address and provide background information to the points outlined in the school district's guidelines for placement of portable/modular childcare on school district sites.

Upon receipt of the proposal the school board's buildings and grounds committee will consider the request and make a recommendation to the school board. The operator will be advised of the board's decision.

If the Board approves the placement and the operator is eligible to receive BC 21 Childcare funding, the school district will assist the operator in preparing a funding application.

GUIDELINES FOR PLACEMENT OF PORTABLE/MODULAR CHILDCARE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT SITES, OR USE OF SCHOOL SPACE FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

Step I

School Information

(to be addressed and included in the preliminary feasibility study by school district)

Is there a space within the school that can accommodate childcare?

If yes, would this space meet childcare licensing regulations?

If yes, could this space be dedicated for childcare use for a minimum of five years?

If yes, could this space be shared with other school/community programs?

Is there space on the school's grounds that could accommodate a portable/modular childcare building?

If yes, would the placement of a portable/modular building significantly impact the

1. school's instructional program?
2. safety and security of students?
3. ability of the school to expand for increased enrolment?

If yes, could the portable/modular building be shared with other school/community programs?

Step II

Neighbourhood/Childcare Services

(to be addressed and included in the formal proposal developed by the operator)

Would the placement of a portable/modular childcare building on the school grounds significantly impact

1. traffic flow in the neighbourhood?
2. parking in the neighbourhood?
3. view and aesthetics of the neighbourhood?

Would the placement of a portable/modular childcare building on the school grounds comply with the city's requirements for

1. health/licensing
2. planning/zoning
3. engineering/auxiliary support services

Does the placement of a portable/modular childcare building on the school grounds have the support of

1. the school's immediate neighbours?
2. the school's parent advisory committee?

3. the city's social planning department?

4. the school administrator/staff?

Is there a documented need for childcare services in the neighbourhood?

Has a neighbourhood need assessment been conducted?

What kind of childcare program is being considered?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> out of school care | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 year old care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pre-school | <input type="checkbox"/> special needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> infant/toddler daycare | <input type="checkbox"/> child minding |

What would be the hours/days/months of operation?

Would the childcare space be available for other childcare or community programs when not in operation?

If yes, how much time would be available for these other programs (hours/days/months)?

Who would be the operator of the childcare program?

What is the proposed childcare program's

1. capital building budget?
2. operating budget?

What is the targeted starting date for the childcare program?