

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: VIDEO/ARCADE GAME ACT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council write to the B.C. Solicitor General and Burnaby M.L.A.'s encouraging them to reconsider implementing a Video/Arcade Game Act for the Province.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to Mr. Cran Campbell, #201-1050 54A Street, Delta B.C., V4M 4B4.

REPORT

Council referred the attached correspondence from Mr. Cran Campbell to the Community Issues and Social Planning Committee for its meeting held on 2002 January 23. Arising from discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations as noted above.

For Council's information, the Committee views self-regulation of the video game industry to be an insufficient alternative to legislation.

As Council is aware, Burnaby has been active since 1993 in encouraging senior levels of government to take action to limit the access of young people to video and electronic games which expose them to violence, hatred and sexually explicit material. A successful Burnaby-sponsored Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) resolution in 1994 prompted the Province to arrange for an industry-regulated rating system to provide consumers with information on the age suitability of various video and electronic games. After seven years of industry self-regulation, the Province concluded that such regulation provided inadequate protection for consumers and, as a result, introduced legislation. The Video Game Act introduced in spring 2001 was intended to:

- impose British Columbia standards on the existing American-developed and industry-based Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) classification system (e.g., videos rated "Teen" by the ESRB would be recommended only for those aged fourteen years and older, rather than the ESRB standard of thirteen years and older; videos rated "Mature" would be available only to those aged 18 years and older, rather than the ESRB standard of 17 years and older);

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- DIR. PLNG. & BLDG.

- facilitate Film Classification Branch examination of all videos rated “Mature” and “Adult Only” for material currently prohibited in motion pictures in British Columbia; and
- impose strict regulations on retailers of videos and video games to limit the access of minors to age-inappropriate material.

The major concerns with continuing with industry self-regulation are:

- that Canadian and/or British Columbia standards are not reflected in the industry’s rating system;
- that about 20% of videos and video games are not rated by the ESRB (e.g., European and Asian imports; and
- the lack of guarantee to parents that retailers will limit the access of minors to age-inappropriate material.

In the absence of video game legislation, the Committee believes that, at a minimum, regulations or guidelines to address the above-noted concerns should be imposed on the industry.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston,
Chair

Councillor N. Harris,
Vice Chair

CORRESPONDENCE
2002 JANUARY 07

Friday, November 16, 2001

Cran Campbell
#201-1050-54A St,
Delta, B.C., V4M 4B4,
Fax & Phone: 604-943-6641**ATTACHMENT 1**

Faxed: 604-294-7535

Attention City Clerk,
Mayor Doug Drummond and Council,NoteIt is suggested that this item of correspondence be referred to the
Community Issues & Social Planning Committees for review.

Last year yourself and council supported bringing in a Canadian, British Columbian Video/Arcade Game Act, and at your annual meeting of the Union of B.C. Municipalities every municipality in this province supported this effort of bringing this about.

As of yesterday the Solicitor General Rich Coleman and the provincial Liberal government has decided to go with self-regulation within this industry (what we've always had) and reverse their support that they gave prior to the election.

As you are probably aware that self-regulation does not work in this industry and that British Columbian parents have had no input on this decision the Liberal government has made, I am wondering what yourself and your council will do to put this right where the government has ignored every municipality in this province and ignored the research and facts that the parents and children of this province need our own legislation to screen and rate these games.

At this moment I have collected over 2,400 signatures (and I will continue to collect them) within the area where I live with no difficulty on obtaining them. Parents want a British Columbian Video/Arcade Game Act in this province. The age representation that signed this petition included teenagers as well as parents and old age pensioners and, also, included a wide range of ethnic groups. I believe these signatures that I have collected in a short amount of time represents the communities and the concerns that people have out there in the towns and the cities of this province concerning video games and violence.

Please, write to me and let me know what yourself and your council will do to get this back on track.

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Sincerely,



Cran Campbell.

Cc: Joan Selby

