

SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**RE: BURNABY INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL POVERTY INITIATIVE STEERING
COMMITTEE REQUESTS**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT**, in response to requests made at the 2002 November 04 City Council meeting, Council write to the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council (BIC) Poverty Initiative Steering Committee to indicate the following:
 - a) the City's willingness to continue to play a role with respect to the Poverty Initiative, providing support and assistance as appropriate and feasible,
 - b) the City's interest in reviewing the findings and recommendations of the next phase of the Poverty Initiative work and its willingness to assist with future advocacy to senior levels of government, as appropriate and feasible,
 - c) the City's ongoing commitment to explore options for improving the Service Credit Program, subject to fiscal realities facing the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department and the City,
 - d) the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department's interest in consulting with young adults from the Burnaby Poverty Initiative Steering Committee to help gain a better understanding of the leisure needs and wants for the 19 - 24 age group, and
 - e) the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department's commitment to proceed with its review of aquatic facilities and, once completed, forward the findings and recommendation to the Commission for consideration.

REPORT

The Social Issues Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2003 January 22, received and adopted the attached report responding to requests from the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council Poverty Initiative Steering Committee regarding further discussions with people from Burnaby's diverse communities about how to co-operate to reduce poverty in the City, advocacy to senior levels of government and additional support from Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services.

COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING
- DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES
- DIRECTOR FINANCE

The Committee noted that, while the City lacks the resources or mandate to respond to poverty concerns on its own, it has played a partnership role with respect to the Poverty Initiative since 2000, when work on the Initiative began. The Committee also noted that, independent of the Poverty Initiative, the City has demonstrated its commitment to addressing the needs of low income Burnaby residents through various policies, programs and actions.

In closing, the Committee acknowledged that poverty is a challenging, multi-faceted issue that will be difficult to eradicate. That said, through the work of the BIC, with support from senior levels of government and the broader community, improvements definitely can be made.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston,
Chair

Councillor L. Rankin,
Vice Chair

Councillor S. Dhaliwal
Member

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY ISSUES &
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

2002 DECEMBER 04

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE COMMISSION

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION &
CULTURAL SERVICES

OUR FILE: 17.831

SUBJECT: BURNABY INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL POVERTY INITIATIVE
STEERING COMMITTEE REQUESTS

PURPOSE: To respond to requests presented at the 2002 November 04 Council meeting by a delegation from the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council Poverty Initiative Steering Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT**, in response to requests made at the 2002 November 04 City Council meeting, Council be requested to write to the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council (BIC) Poverty Initiative Steering Committee to indicate the following:
 - a) the City's willingness to continue to play a role with respect to the Poverty Initiative, providing support and assistance as appropriate and feasible,
 - b) the City's interest in reviewing the findings and recommendations of the next phase of the Poverty Initiative work and its willingness to assist with future advocacy to senior levels of government, as appropriate and feasible,
 - c) the City's ongoing commitment to explore options for improving the Service Credit Program, subject to fiscal realities facing the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department and the City,
 - d) the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department's interest in consulting with young adults from the Burnaby Poverty Initiative Steering Committee to help gain a better understanding of the leisure needs and wants for the 19 - 24 age group, and
 - e) the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department's commitment to proceed with its review of aquatic facilities and, once completed, forward the findings and recommendation to the Commission for consideration.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 2002 November 04, Council received a delegation from the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council (BIC) Poverty Initiative Steering Committee. The delegation discussed concerns relating to poverty in Burnaby, as outlined in the recently printed document, *Beyond Statistics: The Burnaby Poverty Profile*.

At the conclusion of its presentation, the delegation made three specific requests;

- i) that City Council support the Steering Committee in holding follow up discussions with people from Burnaby's diverse communities about how to cooperate to reduce poverty in the city,
- ii) that Council urge senior levels of government to invest in programs which will help people in Burnaby who live below the low income cut-offs (LICOs) with paying for basic necessities of life (e.g., education, health, housing), and
- iii) that Council help the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Commission to:
 - a) adjust the Service Credit Program to provide people with low incomes year-long access to facilities, without limitations of specific dollar amounts,
 - b) increase the range of programs available for people aged from 19 to 24 years, and
 - c) develop additional recreation facilities in the south area of Burnaby (where the delegation claimed there are no pools or rinks that are accessible by public transportation).

Council referred the foregoing questions to the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee (CISPC) and Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Commission for consideration. This report responds to Council's request. It consists of three components: a brief overview of the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council Poverty Initiative, a response to the questions raised by the delegation, and concluding comments.

2.0 POVERTY INITIATIVE

In September 2000, Burnaby Inter-Agency Council initiated an examination of the poverty situation in the city. The BIC invited various speakers to address the topic at its regular meetings in late 2000 and early 2001. It also planned and hosted a community forum on poverty in June 2001. The City agreed to contribute up to \$2,000 towards the forum. Also, staff assisted with the forum planning, and the Chair of the CISPC and staff gave presentations at the event.

Following the Poverty Forum, a subcommittee from the BIC developed a grant application, requesting United Way to provide \$15,000 for continued work on the Poverty Initiative. United Way approved the grant request in 2001 December. In early 2002, the BIC struck a steering committee (the Poverty Initiative Steering Committee) to coordinate the poverty work. The key focus of the activities involved preparation of the *Beyond Statistics* document. The document reviewed existing statistical data on poverty in the city and presented personal stories of Burnaby residents from various backgrounds who experience poverty. In preparing the report, efforts were made to consult with and involve people who are experiencing poverty - both through steering committee membership and participation in consultation meetings.

At present, the BIC is collaborating on development of a further grant application to United Way. Details of the application have yet to be confirmed. It is expected, however, that the next phase of the poverty work will involve developing an action plan, increasing the capacity of low income people to address their needs and participate in broader community life, and garnering broad-based commitment to address poverty concerns in the city.

3.0 QUESTIONS RAISED BY DELEGATION

3.1 Support for Follow-Up Consultation

Discussion

As noted, the City has supported the BIC on its work to date on the poverty initiative. Examples of support include participation in planning meetings, provision of data, and participation in and limited funding assistance for the 2001 June poverty forum. Also, as indicated in previous reports on the matter, while the City lacks the resources or mandate to respond to poverty concerns on its own, it can play a partnership role with other parties in addressing the concerns.

Further, independent of the Poverty Initiative, the City has demonstrated its support for addressing the needs of low income Burnaby residents through various policies, programs, and actions. Examples include:

- making City land available on a long term lease basis for affordable and special needs housing projects
- in conjunction with the Burnaby School District, providing funding and related support for the Burnaby Community School program
- monitoring the impacts of the Provincial Core Review process on Burnaby residents and calling for changes, accordingly

- requesting senior governments to make program and policy changes on such matters as child care, affordable housing, seniors' benefits, and health care.
- developing and implementing City policies with respect to child care, multiculturalism, group homes, and supportive housing
- stipulating that a percentage of the residential development on large publicly-owned sites (e.g., Cariboo, George Derby, Oaklands) consist of non-market or affordable housing
- encouraging developers to include amenities in their projects which benefit the community - especially people with lower incomes (e.g., child care facilities, rental accommodation, community agency office and program space, community meeting rooms)
- requiring developers to build and/ or fund construction of three state of the art group day care centres, which are owned by the City and operated by non-profit societies
- implementing the Service Credit Program, whereby low income residents receive annual credits to be used for Parks & Recreation programs (as discussed further under Section 3.3.1 and Appendix 1 of this report).

With these points in mind, it would seem appropriate for the City to lend its support to further work on the Poverty Initiative.

Proposed Response

It is proposed that the City advise the Poverty Initiative Steering Committee of its willingness to continue to play a role with respect to the Poverty Initiative, providing support and assistance as appropriate and feasible.

3.2 Advocacy to Senior Levels of Government

Discussion

The City has a strong tradition of advocating to senior governments on a range of social policy issues (e.g., affordable housing programs, child care policies, health funding). Therefore, advocacy to senior governments on behalf of low income residents would be consistent with the City's past practice. Before undertaking such advocacy, however, the City would need to have a specific position or recommendation to put forward (i.e., little would be gained from the City putting forward a blanket recommendation that the Federal or Provincial Governments invest in programs to help low income residents).

Proposed Response

It is proposed that the City inform the Poverty Initiative Steering Committee of its interest in reviewing the findings and recommendations of the next phase of the poverty initiative

work and its willingness to assist with future advocacy to senior levels of government, as appropriate and feasible.

3.3 Additional Support from Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

The delegation's requests regarding Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services consisted of three components, as outlined below.

3.3.1 First Component: Adjust the Service Credit Program to provide people with low incomes year-long access to facilities, without limitations of specific dollar amounts

Discussion

Since its inception in the early 1970s, the Burnaby Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department has provided some form of assistance to help people in need to access leisure services. The benefits were initially targeted to seniors and people with disabilities. In 1993, the Department introduced the Service Credit Program, which shifted the benefits to people with low incomes - regardless of age or ability levels. The Service Credit Program, is evaluated each year during the Department's annual review of Fees and Charges. In 2002, the service credit amount for eligible Burnaby residents was \$120 per person. In 2003, the credit will rise to \$125.

In response to the BIC's proposed changes to the Service Credit Program, staff raised the matter at a meeting of the Burnaby Recreation Access Committee (BRAC)¹ in November. While some committee members were absent, those present expressed the view that current level of annual service credit (i.e., \$120 per person per family) was appropriate. They advised, however, that the \$120 annual credit amount may be inadequate for single low income individuals (i.e, while families are able to pool their service credit dollars towards a variety of recreation activities, unattached low income individuals do not have that option). Further, BRAC members supported the idea of a staff review of alternatives for increasing drop-in access to pools and rinks for qualifying individuals. They understood that this review, if conducted, would

¹ The BRAC is an ad hoc committee that discusses matters relating to leisure access for people with disabilities. Its membership consists of representatives of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department, Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI), Mainstream Society for ProActive Community Living, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and the Special Olympics.

occur in conjunction with the annual examination of the Service Credit Program amounts.

Proposed Response

It is proposed that the City inform the Poverty Initiative Steering Committee of its ongoing commitment to explore options for improving the Service Credit Program, subject to fiscal realities facing the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department and the City.

3.3.2 Second Component: Increase the range of programs available for people aged from 19 to 24 years

Discussion

As is clear from looking at the Burnaby Parks Recreation and Cultural Services Leisure Guide, a variety of sport, fitness and cultural programs is available in the city for adults aged from 19-55 years. Staff have raised this issue with representatives of the Burnaby Poverty Initiative Steering Committee. Steering Committee members continue to contend, however, that leisure opportunities for the 19 to 24 year group need to be expanded.

Proposed Response

It is proposed that staff consult with the young adults from the Burnaby Poverty Initiative Steering Committee to help gain a better understanding of the leisure needs and wants for the 19 - 24 age group. Staff would consider the information generated through the consultations in future program planning, keeping the Commission and CISP apprised accordingly.

3.3.3 Third Component: Develop additional recreation facilities in the south area of Burnaby

Discussion

Burnaby Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services has one indoor aquatic facility in the south, one in the north, and one in central Burnaby. Of the three arenas in Burnaby, one is located in the north and two in central Burnaby. All facilities are accessible by public transportation.

At present, there are no plans to expand arena facilities in Burnaby. However, a review of aquatic facilities and services is currently underway. The review will help to determine needs for the expansion or construction of aquatic facilities in Burnaby. Any decision regarding a potential new pool for south Burnaby would need to be made in the context of this broader review.

Proposed Response

It is proposed that the City inform the BIC of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department's commitment to proceed with its review of aquatic facilities and, once completed, forward the findings and recommendation to the Commission for consideration.

4.0 CONCLUSION

As requested by City Council, this report has responded to questions posed by representatives of the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council (BIC) Poverty Initiative Steering Committee at the 2002 November 04 meeting of Council. The report noted that, while the City lacks the resources or mandate to respond to poverty concerns on its own, it has played a partnership role with respect to the Poverty Initiative since 2000, when work on the Initiative began. It also noted that, independent of the Poverty Initiative, the City has demonstrated its commitment to addressing the needs of low income Burnaby residents through various policies, programs, and actions.

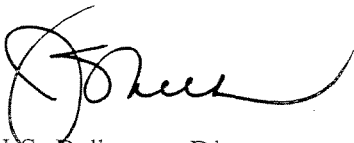
In closing, it must be acknowledged that poverty is a challenging, multi-faceted issue that will be difficult (if not impossible) to eradicate. That said, through the work of the BIC, with support from senior levels of government and the broader community, improvements definitely can be made.

In response to the questions posed by the November 04 delegation, it is recommended that Council be requested to write to the BIC Poverty Initiative Steering Committee to indicate

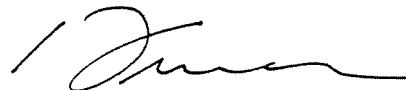
- the City's willingness to continue to play a partnership role with respect to the Poverty Initiative, providing support and assistance as appropriate and feasible,
- the City's interest in reviewing the findings and recommendations of the next phase of the poverty initiative work and its willingness to assist with future advocacy to senior levels of government, as appropriate and feasible,
- the City's ongoing commitment to explore options for improving the Service Credit Program, subject to fiscal realities facing the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department and the City,

- the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department's interest in consulting with young adults from the Burnaby Poverty Initiative Steering Committee to help gain a better understanding of the leisure needs and wants for the 19 - 24 age group, and
- the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department's commitment to proceed with its review of aquatic facilities and, once completed, forward the findings and recommendation to the Commission for consideration.

With respect to the recreation-related concerns, staff will meet with the Burnaby Poverty Profile Initiative Steering committee and Burnaby Recreation Access committee to review issues and options discussed in this report. We will take the information from the consultations into account in future program planning, keeping the Commission and CISP apprised accordingly. Also, we will keep the CISPC and Commission apprised on an ongoing basis as work on the Poverty Initiative proceeds.



J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING



Kate Friars, Director
PARKS, RECREATION AND
CULTURAL SERVICES

JF\CL\sa

cc: City Manager
Director Finance

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