

SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

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*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS***SUBJECT: BURNABY ETHNOCULTURAL ADVISORY ASSOCIATION REQUESTS****RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT a copy of this report be sent to Peter Capadouca, President, Burnaby Ethnocultural Advisory Association, 4736 Curr Place, Burnaby, B.C., V5G 3X9.

REPORT

The Social Issues Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2006 March 29, received and adopted the *attached* report in response to the Burnaby Ethnocultural Advisory Association's appearance as a delegation before the Committee last year.

The Committee proposed that staff continue to meet with members of the BEAA on an as required, periodic basis in the future. The Committee further advised that the intent of the meetings would be to provide an opportunity for staff to share information and seek suggestions concerning City initiatives. In addition, these meetings would give the BEAA an opportunity to provide updates on their activities and concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Sav Dhaliwal
ChairCouncillor Dan Johnston
Vice ChairCouncillor Garth Evans
Member

COPY – CITY MANAGER
DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING
DIR. PARKS, REC. & CULTURAL SERV.

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

DATE: 2006 March 17

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 1750-20
*Ref: Multiculturalism –
Staff Working Group*

SUBJECT: BURNABY ETHNOCULTURAL ADVISORY ASSOCIATION REQUESTS

PURPOSE: To provide an assessment and proposed response to requests made to the Social Issues Committee by the Burnaby Ethnocultural Advisory Association.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to Peter Capadouca, President, Burnaby Ethnocultural Advisory Association, 4736 Curr Place, Burnaby, B.C., V5G 3X9.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 2005 March 23, the Social Issues Committee received a delegation from the Burnaby Ethnocultural Advisory Association (BEAA). Members of the delegation indicated that the BEAA is a non-profit organization, founded in 2003, which grew out of an awareness of:

- changing demographics of Burnaby;
- resulting shifts in social issues; and
- the emerging need for strategic social planning around intercultural¹ concerns.

They further indicated that the organization is committed to forging and enhancing the “intercultural connectedness” of Burnaby’s diverse communities. At the conclusion of their presentation, the BEAA members requested that the City:

- 1) support the BEAA’s proposed pilot project, “Let’s Talk;”
- 2) establish an Ethnocultural Advisory Committee to advise the City on ethnocultural relations strategies; and

¹ The terms ethnocultural, intercultural, and multicultural are related, but distinct. *Ethnocultural* refers to particular linguistic, cultural, or racially distinct groups in the community. *Multicultural* refers to the influence or prominent characteristics of several cultural groups or people. *Intercultural* refers to the interaction of community members of various cultural backgrounds.

- 3) develop a unique intercultural strategic plan and work program, based on community consultations, to facilitate intercultural dialogue, networking and participation in the community.

Arising from discussion, the Committee asked staff to prepare a report concerning the delegation's proposals. This report responds to the Committee's request. It consists of four components: a policy and demographic context for Burnaby; a review of the BEAA's requests; a discussion regarding ongoing dialogue between the City and BEAA; and concluding comments.

2.0 POLICY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

2.1 Policy Context

Burnaby adopted a Multicultural Policy in 1986 (see Appendix 1, *attached*), making it one of the first municipalities in the province to do so. The key thrust of the Policy is that Burnaby recognizes itself as a culturally diverse society in which multiculturalism is a source of enrichment and strength.

To coordinate implementation of the Policy, the City established an inter-departmental Multicultural Staff Working Group in late 1986. In addition to City employees, the Staff Working Group had representation from the Burnaby School District and Burnaby Multicultural Society. The group was in place for nearly ten years, undertaking a range of projects over that period. It disbanded in 1995, after which time individual departments assumed responsibility for the Policy implementation.

With the support of Council and its committees, the Staff Working Group and individual City departments have pursued a variety of multicultural initiatives over the years, focusing on such areas as:

- *Staff development* – i.e., sponsoring training to help City employees to i) increase their cross-cultural understanding and sensitivity and ii) develop improved skills in serving an increasingly diverse public.
- *Awareness raising* – i.e., sponsoring various initiatives to raise the awareness of staff and the public of the diversity and richness of Burnaby's diverse cultural makeup.
- *Collaboration* – i.e., working with the School District, community groups, non profit agencies, municipal and senior governments, and others on a myriad of multicultural initiatives.
- *Orientation* – i.e., providing tours and distributing information on City Hall and Burnaby's programs and services to groups of recent immigrants.
- *Communication* – i.e., providing residents with key information on City policies, programs, plans, and services in a diversity of languages.

- *Welcoming and inclusion* – i.e., providing multilingual signage on City facilities and arranging for multilingual consultation for community planning processes.

The City has also liaised with and provided support to various community agencies pursuing multicultural aims (e.g., through provision of community grants, allocation of space in community resource centres, collaboration on projects). Further, the City's partnership with the School District in the community school system is believed to have played a significant role in fostering intercultural connectedness in a number of Burnaby neighbourhoods.

A recent – and significant – example of a City multicultural or ethnocultural initiative is the proposed Edmonds multi-service hub facility development. In 2006 January, Council directed staff to develop a submission to the Federal Government for capital funding for a multi-service hub facility in the Edmonds area. The hub facility is primarily intended as a resource for provision of programs and services for immigrants in Burnaby and neighbouring municipalities. Federal and Provincial ministries, non-profit agencies, and the broader community are expected to partner in the venture. As a tangible demonstration of its commitment to the project, the City is offering to contribute the land for the facility (with an estimated value of \$2.4 million).

In sum, Burnaby has a strong track record with respect to multicultural policy initiatives

2.2 Demographic Context

Along with Vancouver and Richmond, Burnaby is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse municipalities in the region. The diversity of the population has increased dramatically in recent years, as seen in the following Census statistics:

- In 2001, 47% of Burnaby residents were immigrants² – up from the 1981 figure of 28%.
- In 2001, the majority (53%) of Burnaby residents had a mother tongue³ other than English. In 1981, only 23% of the local population had a non-English mother tongue.
- In 2001, 28% of Burnaby residents reporting a single home language⁴ spoke languages other than English at home. In 1981, the figure was 11%.
- In 2001, 49% of the Burnaby population consisted of visible minorities,⁵ up from the 1996 figure of 39%.

² Immigrants include all residents who were born outside of Canada.

³ Mother tongue is defined as the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time the census was taken.

⁴ Home language refers to the language most often spoken at home. The Census contains data on residents who speak a single home language, and those who speak two or more.

Also, according to the Immigrant Services Society of BC's statistics, 34% of the Government-Assisted Refugees⁶ arriving in the province in 2005 resided in Burnaby. In short, Burnaby is an ethnically and culturally diverse municipality, with the diversity expected to continue to increase into the future. It is recognized that such diversity contributes to the vitality, strength, and richness of the city. It is also recognized that the diversity presents challenges – challenges with ensuring that services are appropriate and accessible to all Burnaby residents, that all residents feel respected and valued, and that Burnaby continues to be a welcoming and inclusive community.

3.0 BEAA PROPOSALS

As noted, through its delegation to the Social Issues Committee, the BEAA made three proposals or requests of the City. With the foregoing policy and demographic information as context, each proposal is considered in turn below.

3.1 First Proposal: Support “Let’s Talk” Pilot Project

In appearing before the Social Issues Committee, representatives from the BEAA shared their draft project proposal entitled “Let’s Talk: Facilitating Inclusive Participation in Civic Affairs.” To quote from the proposal, the project aimed “to provide a diverse group of 50 to 60 individuals representative of our multicultural community with the knowledge and skills needed to engage in using different strategies to promote intercultural dialogue about how to value and work with diversity to achieve identified standards of inclusiveness and participation in civic affairs in Burnaby.” To engage participants, the BEAA proposed to hold six thematic public lectures or dialogues, one conversation circle, and one public workshop.

The BEAA asked that the City support its efforts in three ways:

- 1) assist with further refinement of the proposal,
- 2) provide financial or in-kind assistance, and
- 3) prepare a letter of support to accompany funding applications to external funders.

In the fall of 2005, the United Way (the primary target for project funding) announced that it would not be supporting the BEAA’s proposal. The BEAA, in

⁵ Statistics Canada’s definition of visible minorities is “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.” The Census only began collecting data on visible minorities in 1996.

⁶ Government-Assisted Refugees are Convention Refugees Abroad and members of the Source Country Class whose initial resettlement in Canada is entirely supported by the Government of Canada or Quebec. The support is delivered by non-governmental agencies, with funding through Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Government-Assisted Refugees who have moved to Burnaby in recent years have come from a diversity of sources, including Africa, Afghanistan, Iran, and Indonesia.

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turn, prepared a revised proposal (still entitled “Let’s Talk”) aimed at developing “a model for creating intercultural community plans for local governments in British Columbia.” The new proposal would involve the City, working in conjunction with 30 to 50 culturally diverse residents, developing an Intercultural Strategic Plan for Burnaby. At the conclusion of the process, the strategic plan and information on its development would be shared with other jurisdictions wishing to address intercultural concerns. The BEAA has indicated that it would not be pursuing funding from United Way for the revised proposal, but would look to the City and other potential funders for support. The association is seeking \$25,800 in funding or in-kind assistance for the project.

Over the past two or so years, staff met several times with representatives of the BEAA to discuss various drafts of the group’s project proposals, review broader concerns of the group, and share information on the City’s policies and initiatives regarding multiculturalism. With respect to the most recent “Let’s Talk” proposal, we acknowledged that it was more focused and tangible than its predecessors. We indicated that a fundamental issue with the proposal, however, was that it presupposed that the City was committed to developing an Intercultural Strategic Plan for Burnaby (which is not the case). Further, if and when the City did decide to prepare such a plan, we would establish our own process for the plan’s development – which would undoubtedly involve community consultation, but not necessarily in the manner proposed by the BEAA.

Additional comments on a potential Intercultural Strategic Plan for Burnaby are provided in Section 3.3, below.

3.2 Second Proposal: Establishment of Ethnocultural Advisory Committee

The BEAA is proposing that the City establish an Ethnocultural Advisory Committee to advise Council on ethnocultural relations strategies. The objective of the proposal (i.e., ensuring that Burnaby continues to implement sensitive and inclusive approaches for all its citizens) warrants support – especially given the increasing diversity of the population, and the City’s demonstrated commitment to multiculturalism. The question is whether a separate advisory committee is the most appropriate vehicle for meeting this objective.

When the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee (the predecessor of the Social Issues Committee) was established in 1989, it was intended to address a range of issues, including multiculturalism. The rationale for the broad-based approach was twofold:

- it would facilitate a cross-pollination of ideas, helping to ensure that various social issues would be addressed from a wide perspective, and a narrow or special interest focus would be avoided; and

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- it would result in an efficient use of resources, helping to prevent Council members and staff from being “spread too thin” through a plethora of committees or subcommittees.

With respect to multicultural or ethnocultural concerns, the Committee has received numerous reports concerning the City’s Multicultural Policy, efforts of the Multicultural Staff Working Group, and related matters over the years. Also, on an ongoing basis, the Committee has sought to ensure that its recommendations are appropriate to, and reflective of, the multicultural nature of the community. The Committee is particularly well positioned to fulfill this role given the diversity of ethnic backgrounds represented in its membership.

Notwithstanding the potential merits of a separate Ethnocultural Advisory Committee, it is believed that the Social Issues Committee continues to be well suited to advise the City on multicultural or ethnocultural matters. Further, it is believed that it is incumbent on *all* City committees and bodies to continue to adopt an inclusive approach, ensuring that their discussions and recommendations respect the diverse cultural makeup of the community.

These points noted, from time to time, on an issue-specific basis, it might be appropriate for the Social Issues Committee to seek the views of the BEAA, Burnaby Inter-Agency Council, or other community groups on multicultural concerns. As well, staff will continue to liaise with community groups and inter-agency networks on multicultural matters, providing pertinent information to the Committee as deemed appropriate.

While establishment of a separate Ethnocultural Advisory Committee is not being recommended at present, the situation will need to be monitored. If circumstances change in the future, it may be appropriate for Council to reconsider establishment of such a committee – either on a standing or ad hoc basis - at that time.

3.3 Third Proposal: Development of Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program

The third proposal of the BEAA is that the City develop an Intercultural Strategic Plan and work program. To quote from the BEAA’s most recent “Let’s Talk” proposal, such a strategic plan would “set out the framework for intercultural community involvement with the City, strategic directions for the municipality, and identify specific objectives, work plans, and time lines for the next 3-5 years.”

While acknowledging the potential merits of an Intercultural Strategic Plan, it should be recognized that development and implementation of such a plan for Burnaby would be a significant undertaking, requiring extensive staff resources

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and time commitment. It is believed that development of such a plan may be premature at present, given that:

- 1) The GVRD is in the process of updating the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP), with the revised plan expected to be presented to the GVRD Board for adoption sometime in 2007. Under provisions of the Local Government Act, the City will be required to amend its Regional Context Statement to comply with the revised Regional Growth Strategy (i.e., the LRSP). Burnaby will thus need to start a process for renewing its Official Community Plan (OCP) and Regional Context Statement in the near future. It is anticipated that the revised OCP will contain an expanded Social Planning section. Further, preparation of the OCP would afford an opportunity for consultation on intercultural concerns. It is hoped that the BEAA would contribute to the OCP update effort.
- 2) With endorsement from the Social Issues Committee and Council, staff recently coordinated a round table consultation regarding potential models for improving collaboration between the City and Burnaby non profit agencies (a report on the round table consultation appears elsewhere on this agenda). The groups consulted expressed strong desire for the City to develop a comprehensive Social Plan for Burnaby – a plan which would articulate the City’s vision, goals, and strategies for addressing a spectrum of social issues (including multiculturalism or interculturalism). While staff is not recommending pursuit of a Social Plan at present (particularly in light of the impending OCP update), it is clear that matter will need to be reviewed in the near future.

Given the foregoing, it would seem logical to delay consideration of a distinct Intercultural Strategic Plan until the parameters of the OCP update have been determined, and the desirability and feasibility of pursuing a Social Plan has been considered. In due course, if it is concluded that a more focused examination of intercultural concerns is required, it may be appropriate to reconsider the notion of developing a specific Intercultural Strategic Plan at that time.

4.0 DIALOGUE WITH THE BEAA

While some differences may exist concurring preferred courses of action, it is recognized that the City and BEAA share a concern for enhancing the intercultural connectedness of Burnaby’s diverse communities. It is also recognized that, while no single non profit body can represent Burnaby’s “multicultural” or “intercultural” voice, the BEAA has a broad-based membership and can provide valuable insights into ethnocultural or intercultural issues facing the City.

With these considerations in mind, staff propose to continue to meet with members of the BEAA on an as required, periodic basis in the future. The intent of the meetings would be two-fold:

- 1) to provide an opportunity for staff to share information, and seek suggestions, concerning pertinent City initiatives; and
- 2) to provide an opportunity for the BEAA to provide updates on its activities or concerns.

As appropriate, staff would inform the Social Issues Committee of noteworthy matters arising from the discussions. We would also inform the Committee if potential fruitful areas for collaboration between the City and BEAA are identified.

5.0 CONCLUSION

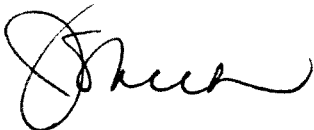
This report has responded to the Social Issues Committee's request for a response to requests made by the Burnaby Ethnocultural Advisory Association. Based on the review, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) Burnaby has a strong tradition of valuing diversity and being proactive with respect to multicultural and ethnocultural policy concerns.
- 2) Burnaby is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse municipalities in the region, and this diversity is expected to increase in the future.
- 3) After its appearance before the Social Issues Committee, the BEAA revised its "Let's Talk" project proposal, having been denied project funding from the United Way. While the revised proposal is more focused and tangible than its predecessor, it is founded on the premise that the City will be preparing an Intercultural Strategic Plan – something the City has not committed to do (see further comments in point 5, below).
- 4) It is important that the City has appropriate vehicles in place for receiving advice on multicultural or ethnocultural matters. It is believed that the Social Issues Committee continues to be well positioned to provide such advice and that establishment of a separate Ethnocultural Advisory Committee is not warranted – at least for the time being.
- 5) Notwithstanding the potential merits of an Intercultural Strategic Plan, development of such a plan would be a significant undertaking. It is suggested that a decision about preparation of an Intercultural Strategic Plan be delayed until the parameters of the forthcoming OCP update have been determined, and the desirability and feasibility of pursuing a Social Plan has been considered.
- 6) While no single non profit body can represent Burnaby's "multicultural" voice, the BEAA has a broad based membership and can provide valuable insights into ethnocultural or intercultural issues facing the City. Therefore, staff propose to continue to meet with representatives of the BEAA to exchange information and , as appropriate, identify areas for potential joint collaboration.

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In closing, it should be stressed that the City shares the BEAA's commitment to forging and enhancing the "intercultural connectedness" of Burnaby's diverse communities. Through its policies and practices, and in collaboration with external agencies and the community, the City has demonstrated long standing leadership and conviction with respect to multiculturalism. It is hoped that the City can continue to work with groups such as the BEAA in ensuring that this tradition is strengthened and enhanced in the future.

It is recommended that a copy of this report be sent to the President of the BEAA.



J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JF:sla:sa
Attachment

Copied to: City Manager
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

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BURNABY MULTICULTURAL POLICY

1. Burnaby recognizes that it is a culturally diverse society in which multiculturalism is a source of enrichment and strength.
2. Burnaby supports equality and the rights of all citizens to access Municipal services.
3. Burnaby promotes understanding, sensitivity and positive attitudes towards people of all ethnic origins, amongst Municipal staff and in the community.
4. Burnaby does not condone discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, color or religion.
5. Burnaby promotes the participation of citizens from all ethno-cultural backgrounds in the development of Municipal bylaws, policies, programs and services.
6. Burnaby reflects these multicultural values appropriately in Municipal bylaws, policies, programs, and promotion and delivery of service.
7. Burnaby encourages and assists staff, boards, commissions and committees of the Municipality to meet these multicultural objectives in the performance of their duties.

Original Multicultural Policy adopted by Council on 1986 April 21; amended policy, presented above, adopted on 1990 July 23.

