



Meeting 2008 Apr 14

COUNCIL REPORT

SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

SUBJECT: YOUTH GAMBLING

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council and the Community Policing Committee receive this report for information.

REPORT

The Social Issues Committee, at its meeting held on 2008 March 20, received and adopted the *attached* report providing information on youth gambling, and current Provincial initiatives to prevent and reduce the incidence of gambling among youth.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor S. Dhaliwal
Chair

Councillor D. Johnston
Vice Chair

Councillor G. Evans
Member

Copied to: City Manager Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director Planning and Building OIC, Burnaby RCMP
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TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE **DATE:** 2008 March 11

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 47000 20

SUBJECT: YOUTH GAMBLING

PURPOSE: To provide the Committee and Council with information on youth gambling, and current Provincial initiatives to prevent and reduce the incidence of gambling among youth.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the Committee forward this report to Council and to the Community Policing Committee for information.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of 2007 October 16, the Social Issues Committee considered an invitation from the B.C. Partnership for Responsible Gambling (the Partnership) to its annual forum scheduled for 2007 November 16. The theme for the 2007 forum was youth gambling. Upon learning that one of the City's Social Planners would be attending the forum, Committee members requested a staff report on highlights from the forum.

This report responds to that request.

2.0 THE B.C. PARTNERSHIP FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

The B.C. Partnership for Responsible Gambling was created by the Province in the autumn of 2006. The Partnership includes the Provincial Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB), the B.C. Lottery Corporation (BCLC), gaming services providers (e.g., casino and bingo hall operators), and local governments. The Partnership is dedicated to promoting responsible gambling in order to reduce the incidence of problem gambling, to reduce the risks and harm related to problem gambling, and to increase public awareness and promote healthy gaming choices. A Steering Committee was created in September 2007 to serve in an advisory capacity to the Partnership. The Steering Committee is also charged with strengthening the partnership by encouraging the participation of municipalities.¹

¹ There are currently nine municipal members of the partnership. The City of Burnaby is not a member, although one of the City's Social Planners is serving a two year term on the Steering Committee.

3.0 YOUTH GAMBLING

The Youth Gambling Forum featured presentations from experts in the field of youth gambling and prevention. The presentations highlighted the prominent position of gambling in youth culture, and youth perspectives on - and motivations for – gambling.² Forum participants were also provided with an overview of existing Provincial youth gambling prevention initiatives, and with an opportunity to identify other initiatives which could be undertaken to reduce the incidence of problem gambling among youth.

3.1 *The Issue*

According to a 2002 gambling prevalence study conducted in British Columbia, 10% of young adults (18 – 24 years old) have a gambling problem. This rate is 2 – 4 times the prevalence rate among adults. There is ample research which demonstrates that youth as young as 13 years actively participate in the addictive activity of gambling.³

Most youth who gamble do not play slot machines and table games in casinos, but purchase lottery tickets and scratch cards, participate in sports pools, and/or gamble from home on computers, cell phones, or hand-held games. According to research conducted by McGill University's International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviours, there are a number of troubling trends in gambling which negatively affect youth, including:

- the perception of gambling as a family activity;⁴
- the perception of gambling as a primary form of entertainment;
- the perception of gambling as the new rite of passage into adulthood;
- an increase in technologically-based gambling; and
- the perception that gambling is a relatively harmless activity.

Generally, youth view gambling as a socially acceptable and enjoyable form of entertainment. They are drawn to it by the fun and excitement of risk-taking, and by what they view as skill development. On a scale of issues youth are concerned about – including drug use, violence, peer pressure, sexually transmitted diseases, street racing, and alcohol misuse – gambling hardly rates.⁵

3.2 *Current Provincial Initiatives Aimed At Youth Gambling*

British Columbia's Problem Gambling Strategy was introduced in 2003 to address the incidence and consequences of problem gambling. With regards youth, a detailed three year plan (2007 – 2010) for the Strategy includes initiatives to:

² Much of the information was derived from recent youth focus groups and a youth survey in British Columbia.

³ A study conducted by the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviours at McGill University found that 56% of Grade 7 students engage in gambling at least once per week. The equivalent figure for cigarette use is 4%, and for alcohol use is 2.6%

⁴ Gambling activities often begin in the home, with parents who purchase lottery tickets as Christmas stocking stuffers for children as young as 10 years.

⁵ This information derives from research conducted in 2006/07 by DECODE, a research and strategy firm which assists organizations to “decode” the behaviour of youth, young adults, and young families.

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- develop a comprehensive youth-specific strategy;
- develop an elementary school prevention educational tool;
- develop a prevention resource for high-schools; and
- deliver the “Know the Score” program at post-secondary institutions.

The Provincial roll-out of KnowDice, the elementary school prevention tool, began in January 2008. The program, which was piloted in Richmond schools with considerable success, will be delivered by Grade 6 teachers in participating communities.⁶ The KnowDice program consists of:

- an interactive CD-rom game which educates elementary school children on the risks associated with excessive gambling and other addictive behaviours; and
- a website designed to provide fun and interactive education about gambling and problem gambling.

The proposed prevention resource for high-school youth is in its infancy. The City of Richmond and the City of Vancouver are currently participating with the Province in the development of a pilot Science World project.

“Know the Score”, an interactive problem gambling awareness program aimed at university and college students, was developed in Ontario. It is designed to dispel myths about winning and losing, to highlight signs of problem gambling, to increase awareness of local problem gambling resources, and to provide information on limiting gambling risks. The program has been delivered on sixty campuses across Canada, and will be introduced to three British Columbia universities (Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, and University College of the Fraser Valley) in spring 2008.

3.3 Next Steps

The Steering Committee for the Partnership will continue to meet to guide the implementation of the above-noted three year plan which, as noted, includes the development of a comprehensive youth strategy. The Steering Committee will consider the potential prevention initiatives pertaining to youth gambling which were suggested at the youth gambling forum, which include:

- the introduction of youth gambling prevention initiatives in more British Columbia communities;
- the development of interactive educational games and materials aimed at parents for placement within gaming facilities;
- the development of resources to assist parents and families to identify unhealthy play; and
- the sponsorship of program assessments to ensure messages to youth and to parents are effective.

⁶ As the KnowDice program is not part of the basic curriculum, school districts and individual teachers can choose to use it or not.

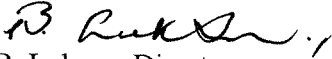
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4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The B.C. Partnership for Responsible Gambling sponsored a forum in November 2007 on the topic of youth gambling. Participants were presented with information on the prominent position of gambling in youth culture, and youth perspectives on - and motivations for - gambling. Forum participants were also provided with an overview of existing Provincial youth gambling prevention initiatives, and with an opportunity to identify other initiatives which could be undertaken to reduce the incidence of problem gambling among youth.

A Steering Committee for the Partnership will continue to meet to provide guidance on the implementation of British Columbia's Responsible Gambling Strategy, which includes a number of elements targeted to youth. Should the Committee wish, additional information on progress with gambling prevention among youth can be provided by staff as it becomes available.

It is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to Council and the Community Policing Committee for information.


B. Luksun, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JS/sla

Copied to: City Manager
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
OIC – Burnaby RCMP

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