



General Purposes Committee

- Date: Monday, December 3, 2007
- Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall
- Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair
Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Cynthia Chen
Councillor Derek Dang
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Rob Howard
Councillor Bill McNulty
- Absent: Councillor Harold Steves
- Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Monday, November 19th, 2007, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

2. **UBCM AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES PILOT PROJECT – GRANT APPLICATION**

(Report: Nov. 22/07, File No.: 03-1087-22-01) (REDMS No. 2305501, 2297281, 2302515)

The Manager, Community Services, Anne Stevens, introduced the new Seniors Wellness Coordinator, Carolyn Brandy, to the Committee.

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Discussion then took place among Committee members and staff on the proposed pilot project, during which the following information was provided in response to questions:

- the project would be a transitional service, taking place once a week for three months, with twelve visits in total, to link recently hospitalized and other isolated and frail seniors with specialized recreation, rehabilitation and education opportunities
- the pilot project would target forty people, 55 years of age and older, however the project related to barriers as opposed to age
- isolated seniors would be identified through such aids as networking and geriatric outreach programs.

During the discussion, information was provided that similar initiatives were being introduced in communities throughout British Columbia.

It was moved and seconded

That the "Decreasing Barriers, Increasing Wellness" project be fully supported, and that the City of Richmond take the lead on this initiative working with the community to build a responsive service network for isolated and frail seniors in our community.

CARRIED

3. **2008 ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELD CAPITAL PROJECT**

(Report: Nov. 29/07, File No.: 06-2345-20-01) (REDMS No. 2308999)

It was moved and seconded

That the 2008 Capital budget include provisions for artificial turf field construction at King George Park, and one other location to be determined in March 2008, for a maximum commitment of \$3,500,000 and an additional operating budget impact of up to \$30,000 or a .03% tax impact.

The question on the motion was not called, as in response to questions, the following information was provided:

- due to increased use of the fields, hydro costs had increased as well as washroom maintenance
- although staff were indicating an additional impact to the operating budget of \$30,000, every effort would be made to reduce that amount as much as possible
- the volume of children playing on the artificial fields had increased significantly since the completion of the three existing fields
- an annual amount of \$15,000 to \$17,000 was spent on returfing the Minoru field, with a major upgrade taking place approximately every ten years
- adoption of the staff recommendation would allow the City to realize its commitment to provide two artificial turf fields in 2008

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- with regard to South Arm Park, City staff had entered into preliminary discussions with School District staff about the configuration of the field, with the result that there were two potential field locations which would not impact the new Whiteside School proposal; staff would be presenting a report in March, 2008 regarding the South Arm Park Master Plan
- with regard to the possible upgrade of the Minoru Park infield to artificial turf, staff intended to initiate a wide consultation process which would include at least twenty regular user groups at the site, the Gateway Theatre, and the tennis club; and would possibly use community associations to seek feedback from walkers
- with respect to Minoru Park, \$600,000 would complete the upgrade of the infield but would not include the required field lighting or the installation of fencing
- the cost of construction for one artificial turf field would be \$1.7 Million
- the impact of snow geese and Canada geese on the City's grass playing fields and the program put in place by the City to remove these birds.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

4. UPGRADE OF RECREATION REGISTRATION AND ELECTRONIC PAYMENT COMPUTER SYSTEMS

(Report: Nov. 20/07, File No.: 04-1300-01/2007-Vol 01) (REDMS No. 223692v9)

It was moved and seconded

That:

- (1) *the City enter into agreements with The Active Network, Ltd. ("TAN") and any other necessary supporting system service providers to replace the current recreation registration and electronic payment computer systems; and*
- (2) *the Director of Information Technology be authorized to execute the necessary agreements.*

The question on the motion was not called, as the following information was provided in answer to questions:

- professional services, in the amount of \$280,000 would be provided through TAN
- if the City remained with the new system for seven years, the City would be paying up to 25% in support costs, which was a typical charge supported by the market

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- the TAN system would provide the ultimate fit for the City; staff research had shown that this belief was substantiated by Metro Vancouver.

During the discussion, information was provided by staff on the steps taken to reuse old computer hardware equipment.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT / BUSINESS & FINANCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

5. **DEMAND FOR AND BUSINESS LICENCING OF TAXICABS IN RICHMOND – REPORT BACK ON REFERRAL**

(Report: Oct. 5/07, File No.: 12-8275-02/2007-Vol 01) (REDMS No. 2281427)

The Director, Transportation, Victor Wei, and the Manager, Business Liaison, Amarjeet Rattan, indicated that they had nothing further to add.

At the request of the Chair, the following delegations then came forward.

Mr. Ken Jang, a lawyer representing Richmond Taxicabs, expressed dismay that consultation had not taken place with existing stakeholders as to the need for additional Class A and Class N taxicabs. He indicated that his client would like the opportunity to make a submission as an existing stakeholder.

Mr. Jang stated that his client recognized the need for additional licences, however, there was concern about the need for balance between the provision of additional licences and unreasonable competition. Mr. Jang advised that during slow periods, Richmond Taxicab drivers were forced to work every other day because if every driver was on the street, then the operators would not make sufficient money to support themselves.

In response to questions, Mr. Jang advised that Richmond Taxicabs currently had 73 or 74 taxicabs and could expand to 100. He further advised that the company had applied for an additional 20 licences but had only been issued with 4. With reference to the length of time required for a resident to obtain a taxicab, information was provided that wait times were often impacted by traffic conditions and other issues, such as calls coming in while shift changes were occurring.

Mr. Jang further advised, in response to the four licences issues to Richmond Taxicabs, that of the four issued, two were Class N licences. He added that the company currently had applications with the Public Transportation Board for fifteen new licences.

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Mr. Parmjit Randahawa, a Director of Garden City Cabs, accompanied by Surinderjit Hundal, Secretary, referred to correspondence received from Mr. Hundal (and which had been circulated to the Committee), which provided information on Garden City Cabs. A copy of this correspondence is on file in the City Clerk's Office.

Mr. Hundal further advised that Garden City Cabs was scheduled to appear before the Public Transportation Board (PTB) on December 10th, 2007, in support of its application for 30 taxicab licences. In response to questions, advice was given that of the 30 licences, 20 vehicles would be for Class A licences and 10 would be Class N.

Discussion then took place with the delegation, during which, in response to questions, the following information was provided:

- Richmond had less taxicabs than any other city in the Lower Mainland
- with reference to the 250 statements regarding unsatisfactory taxicab services which had been submitted by Garden City Cabs as part of its application to the PTB, the primary complaint related to the wait time and the inability of an individual to get through to a taxicab company to request a taxi; other complaints dealt with the non-arrival of a taxicab after being pre-booked
- the statements did not focus on one company and the forms were completed by the customers
- the taxicab licences awarded by the PTB would be owned by the company and not the drivers.

The Chair thanked the delegations for their input, and discussion then ensued among Committee members and staff on:

- (a) the need to address how many additional taxicab licences should be allowed in the City, if any;
- (b) whether these licences should be all Class A or Ns, if the number of taxicab licences were to be increased;
- (c) the decision which would be made by the PTB;
- (d) the City's authority to restrict the number of taxicab licences permitted in the City; and
- (e) the ramifications to the City if the cap on the number of taxicab licences allowed in Richmond was eliminated.

During the discussion, with reference to the number of taxicab licences which the City could support, advice was given that staff did not have the expertise to provide specific figures. However, information was provided that based on a regional average, the City was short 40 licences, and it was felt that this figure would be the most appropriate number to be considered. Further information was provided that at the present time, there were 20 Class N taxicab licences operating in Richmond.

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As a result of the discussion, two separate motions were introduced to first approve Option B and then Option C, however, there were no seconders for either motion.

The following motion was then introduced:

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the report (dated October 5, 2007, from the Director, Transportation, and the Manager, Business Liaison), regarding “Demand for and Business Licensing of Taxicabs in Richmond – Report Back on Referral”, be received for information.*
- (2) *That the issue of the specific number of taxicabs needed for the City be referred to staff, and that the question of whether there should be more Class A or Class N licences, and if there is a greater number, whether issuance of these licences should be staggered.*

The question on the motion was not called, as it was noted that staff had already indicated that they did not have the expertise to determine the demand for taxicabs in Richmond or what should be the appropriate number of vehicles. A further comment was made that Council was endeavouring to build a city which was less dependent on the automobile and were succeeding with increased densification in the City Centre and the construction of the Canada Line.

Discussion continued, with general agreement being expressed to some of the opinions expressed previously, however, concern was voiced about the City giving up its ability to withhold business licences from any taxicab company which did not provide adequate service to the public.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **DEFEATED** with Cllrs. Barnes, Dang, E. Halsey-Brandt, S. Halsey-Brandt and Howard opposed.

It was moved and seconded

That the report (dated October 5, 2007, from the Director, Transportation, and the Manager, Business Liaison), regarding “Demand for and Business Licensing of Taxicabs in Richmond – Report Back on Referral”, be received for information.

The question on the motion was not called, as the question was raised as to whether or not the City could advise the Provincial Transportation Board (PTB) of its support for an increase in taxicab licences for the City. Also addressed during the discussion was the need for the attendance of City staff at the upcoming hearing and how the City would deal with any potential increase in the number of taxicabs licences approved by the PTB.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED** with Cllr. Howard opposed.

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It was moved and seconded

That a letter be written to the Provincial Transportation Board indicating Council's opinion that more taxicab licences for Richmond would be justified.

The question on the motion was not called, as discussion ensued on the number of taxicab licences which were needed for the City and whether the City was prepared to support 60 licences, if that was the number required. During the discussion it was noted that the PTB would be meeting on December 10th, 2007 and staff would be unable to determine a definitive number before that time.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting adjourn (5:50 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Monday, December 3rd, 2007.

Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie
Chair

Fran J. Ashton
Executive Assistant, City Clerk's Office