



To: Richmond City Council
From: Councillor Bill McNulty
Chair, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee
Re: **HAMILTON CHILD CARE FACILITY – EXPANDED USES**
Date: October 5, 2006
File: 07-3070-03-03/
Vol 01

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee, at its meeting held on September 26, 2006, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

Committee Recommendation

1. *That the planned Child Care facility at 23031 Westminster Highway not be expanded for additional community use; and*
2. *That staff pursue and investigate additional resources in the Hamilton neighbourhood in order to increase community amenities and facilities.*

Councillor Bill McNulty, Chair
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that the Committee added Part 2 above.

Staff Report

Origin

The current Fire Hall in Hamilton at 23031 Westminster Hwy is not in appropriate condition for renovation and will be demolished when the new Fire Hall is operational. Once this transition is complete, Council has designated the site to be leased to the Society of Richmond Children's Centres for the purpose of construction of a new child care facility.

The Society of Richmond Children's Centres intends to construct a 5,000 square foot, one-story modular building to accommodate 79 new child care spaces in the community. An additional 4,320 square feet of surface level outdoor space will also be required to meet licensing requirements for play areas. Funding for this project will come from the City's contribution of land and \$110,000 towards site preparation, the Provincial Government's Targeted Major Capital Funding program, fundraising and bank financing.

On June 27th 2006, the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee endorsed the following resolution:

That staff review maximizing the expansion of the Hamilton Fire Hall site for uses compatible with child care; and

That staff examine opportunities for other facilities in the community including library space.

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the planned Child Care facility at 23031 Westminster Hwy not be expanded for community recreation use and to outline the possibilities and timelines for meeting community needs in other ways.

Analysis

A number of factors influence the appropriateness of adding community recreation space to the planned child care facility including incompatible community needs, constrained site conditions, limited funding options – both capital and operating, and challenging operating models.

Community Needs:

Thorough consultation has occurred with the Hamilton Community Association in regards to this proposal. Close examination of the current and future demographics of the Hamilton area, usage patterns at the Community Centre and other options for partnerships in the community were explored.

Together, staff and the Association identified that a community need exists for a library, a fitness centre and dedicated space for youth. However, use of a second floor at this site for these purposes would create operational and safety challenges. More staff would be required to manage a separate facility, the need to cross a busy thoroughfare to travel between the existing community centre and the child care facility and parking limitations are deterrents for this particular site.

The PRCS Facilities and Amenities Study planned for this fall to develop priorities for facility development City-wide will consider the needs and priorities of the Hamilton community as identified above in a greater context. Additionally, partnerships with the Boys & Girls Club, the local shopping mall and the School District are currently being examined by the Community Association to help meet some of the identified needs including the possibility of combining School and Community uses in the library.

The Society of Richmond Children's Centres was also consulted regarding this proposal. It is supportive of second floor and identified many compatible uses for this space including a library and multi-purpose rooms. The Society does view additional space as a way of meeting its original goal of providing a Community Services Hub. Organizations such as Touchstone Family Association, Volunteer Richmond and the Richmond Society for Community Living are identified as potential providers of outreach services to the Hamilton Community.

Although these community services are certainly needed in Hamilton, the cost of a second floor addition without a clear operating model which clearly allocates revenues and responsibilities is difficult to justify. To address this, the Hamilton Community Association has expressed an interest in working with the Society of Richmond Children's Centres and its partners to collaborate in the use of both existing and future community places and spaces in Hamilton.

Site Conditions:

To meet the needs of child care, the entire site footprint must be used for indoor and outdoor space. Therefore, the only option is an additional story for community use. Adding this level significantly changes the nature of the facility and means that both ground and upper level space will be compromised by additional space requirements for an elevator, stairs and circulation.

Parking needs will increase with the construction of a second level. Currently, only thirteen (13) parking spaces are planned for the one story building. Since the City's parking bylaw only requires three (3) stalls for child care and two (2) stalls per 1,076 square feet for community recreation space, these thirteen (13) stalls meet the Bylaw requirement. However, operationally, more stalls will be required to meet user needs and off-site parking will be necessary. Pedestrian accommodation from this off-site parking will be required given that there is no sidewalk leading directly to the site.

Capital and Operating Funding:

The additional \$1.4 million required to add a second floor for community use. Partial funding is available in council provision and the leisure facility reserve. An additional \$117,500 for annual operating costs would need to be allocated in the 2007 City operating budget. No offset for this increase has been identified without reducing other programs or services.

Ownership and Operating Model:

Adding a second level for community use creates challenges as to who owns and operates the facility. \$500,000 Provincial Capital Funding has been allocated to the Society of Richmond Children's Centres and not to the City. However, should the City wish to add another level then it seems reasonable that the City build the facility itself and lease back the first floor to the Society. Because the Provincial Funding is currently allocated to the Society and not to the City, there is a possibility that this model may jeopardize the Provincial Funding agreement.

Operation and management of the building is currently anticipated to be the responsibility of the Society of Richmond Children's Centres. If a second level is added for community use, then the Society would prefer the City manage the building. This adds additional operational costs for the City as well as liability and responsibility for its long-term operation.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact of endorsing the recommendation to not move forward with expanding the Child Care facility for community use.

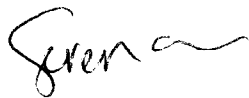
Conclusion

The need for additional space for community needs in the Hamilton area is clear. A growing population and a concentration of families means that more amenities are needed. However, the site constraints and operational challenges created by a adding a second story to the planned child care facility on the fire hall site mean that this is not the best proposal to meet these needs.

Instead, a city-wide facility assessment will occur this fall and exploration of potential partnerships will continue to ensure that the Hamilton community is well served for now and into the future.



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