

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

**Anderson Room, City Hall
6911 No. 3 Road**

**Tuesday, July 25, 2006
4:00 p.m.**

July 25, 2006

Attention: Chairman Councillor Bill McNulty and Members of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee. My name is Henry Beh and I have been a resident of Richmond for over 30 years. I am currently the Executive Director of the Richmond Chinese Community Society (RCCS).

I would like to first of all, thank the committee members for allowing us the time to present our organization's need for more community spacing. Allow me now to give you some insight into the creation of RCCS and its evolving role in the community over the years.

In the early 1980s a group of Chinese parents got together to help support and run a Chinese language school. After several successful years, it became apparent that this group was capable of giving much more to the community than just running a school. So in 1989, the Richmond Chinese Community Society was founded. The focus of this non-profit charitable organization, was and still is to promote the spirit of community services and volunteerism amongst those with a Chinese ethnic background, through various activities for the betterment of the City of Richmond.

We have had many achievements in the past seventeen years. We are now a recognized organization by both civic leaders as well as mainstream society and a staple in the Chinese Canadian community in Richmond. In 2005, RCCS was awarded the *City of Richmond Community Spirit Award* for our outstanding contributions to *Intercultural Diversity* within the community.

Our annual Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations have helped to bring our culture to the two local shopping malls, Richmond Centre and Lansdowne Centre. These large celebrations have helped to reduce the boundaries between cultures by allowing others to share in our traditions and beliefs. Similarly, we were the first Chinese organization to participate in both the Fraser River Festival and the Salmon Festival at the Canada Day parade. Our annual Community Dinner, Senior's Lunch Day Celebration, and

Halloween Party, allow us to continue to promote an understanding of our cultural identity through an exchange of traditions.

RCCS has also been helping the Richmond community centres in some of the recreational programs such as Ballroom Dance, Fitness Dance and several other seniors' programs. We hosted events such as the Chinese New Year Celebration at West Richmond Community Centre, Robbie Burns Dinner and Karaoke Party at the Minoru Senior Centre. These events enable their members and our members to interact and understand each other's different cultural backgrounds.

On July 12, 2006, RCCS organized a training session at our location for staff from the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department. There were 26 participants including representatives from all the eight Community Centres in Richmond, Richmond Arts Centre, Richmond Museum, Minoru Seniors Centre and Minoru Aquatic Centre. The training session was a success and the feedback we received was very positive (Please see the attached comments from the participants).

After seventeen years in Richmond and due to an expansion in our popularity with our many community offerings, we hope the city will be able to provide us with free community spacing in exchange for our organization's continued creation of publicly accessible programs. RCCS currently conducts its own fundraising with most of the money going towards our \$70,000+ in rent a year. Our group reaches out to more than just the Chinese population and aims for cultural inclusiveness.

With added community spacing for RCCS, our organization looks forward to working with the City to provide programs and services for the fast growing population in Richmond.

Yours sincerely,



Henry Beh
Executive Director
Richmond Chinese Community Society



City of Richmond

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July 18, 2006

File:

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

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Attention : Mimi Chan, President RCCS

Re: RCCS City of Richmond Staff Training Event

I am writing to thank you on behalf of the City of Richmond for the excellent staff training event held on Wednesday 12th July 2006. The event was well organised and perfectly met the needs of our staff. Staff found the event informative and useful and the skills learnt will directly assist us in our goal of making Richmond the most appealing, liveable and well managed community in Canada.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Henry Beh and the entire team of board members and RCCS employees and volunteers that made the event such a great success. I would also like to say how much the City of Richmond and in particular the Parks Recreation and Cultural Services Department are looking forward to working with you in the future. Thank-you again for a great event.

Yours truly,

Alan Hill

Cultural Diversity Coordinator

AH:ah

CITY Staff Feedback RCCS training event 12th July 2006

Hi Henry...feedback from staff (in their own words) taken from emails I have been sent. As you can see its all extremely positive!

thanks again

Alan

Did the session meet your expectations ...please explain why it did or did not

"Yes, the connections with the RCCS Board members in addition to Henry will be useful. It also encouraged me to try and get a little better at some of the common Cantonese / Mandarin phrases".

"It's a great learning opportunity for staff, particularly those who haven't had a lot of working experience with members of the Chinese community. I think that learning about other groups, particularly those groups comprising a sizeable community in Richmond, is important in terms of understanding and appreciating their needs".

"The session was great, thank you for organising it".

- "I like that it was sort of "hands-on" for practical tips and information. I wish the front desk staff would attend something like this. I passed on the written material to be circulated to staff at the centre".

- "Yes, I thought it was excellent for a first session
- The room size was not ideal, but on second thought, it may help to emphasize their limited situation, so in the end it could be a positive.
- The social opportunity afterward was also fun and helpful
- It may be helpful to have some information on the gaps that they see, in terms of what the community needs, but RCCS cannot provide due to space or funding restrictions. This way we could program more effectively and there may be opportunities to partner. It was great to see the Chinese fitness dance class, though.
- I thought the body language portion was a bit rushed, so it might be good to do this in conjunction with the language portion.

Also, perhaps more information about Mandarin being the official language, and Cantonese as a dialect... what pin yin is and the difference between Mandarin and Cantonese pronunciation"

"Yesterday's session with RCCS was excellent. Thank you for setting this up for all of us. Enjoyed the tips on effective communication: greetings, and body language information. Making a warm and welcoming centre with appropriate signage is something we will work on. Hearing what activities the Chinese people enjoy is good to know. Dim Sum lunch was excellent, what great hosts! Look forward to working more closely with RCCS"

"Mostly, however, I would have liked to delve into the Culture more and spent more time with language and custom"

"Yes, I think the information regarding the business card transfer and tea protocol was good".

Did you get the information you needed/will the information from today's session be useful in your work (please explain how)

"I enjoyed the workshop and thought the small phrases/greetings were a helpful addition".

- "Perhaps the immigrant experience from the standpoint of youth? It would be great to hear from kids who immigrated at different ages, as well as first generation youth (especially if we include the Association youth development workers)"

"A similar session for attendants".

"I think future sessions should be for the front line staff from a customer service perspective".

"I would still like to better understand how the culture is changing and influencing youth in Richmond. I think this is an important topic for us to understand for planning purposes".

Any other comments you would like to make

- "The basic geography I thought was good.
- I think the oral histories are important because they pass on mores that the culture is based on".

- "Dim Sum was great, a good, appropriate end for networking and getting to know the group better".

"Great to make connections, see what their organization does, customs/traditions, stories".

"Thanks for organizing! It would have been nice for the session to be a bit longer and possibly with smaller discussion groups".

" I appreciated Henry's entertaining style".