



City of Surrey

Police Committee

Minutes

Executive Boardroom
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2003
Time: 9:00 a.m.

Present:

Chair: Councillor Tymoschuk
Mayor D.W. McCallum
Councillor J. Villeneuve
Councillor B. Steele
Councillor P. Priddy
Councillor B. Bose
Councillor D. Watts
Councillor M. Hunt
Councillor J. Higginbotham

Absent:

Staff Present:

City Manager
A/Commr. G. Forbes, RCMP
Supt. R. Bennett, RCMP
City Solicitor
Manager, By-law & Licensing Services
S. Palmer, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Public Safety Committee Meeting - October 22, 2003

It was Moved by Councillor Steele
Seconded by Councillor Hunt
That the minutes of the open Public Safety
Committee meeting held October 22, 2003 be adopted.
Carried

The Chair noted the agenda order would be varied slightly to provide for RCMP presentations.

B. RCMP

A/Commr. Forbes provided comments relative to a shooting incident on December 5, 2003 at a SkyTrain station in Surrey. He continued that the matter is under investigation by an independent team of officers.

Councillors Higginbotham and Watts entered the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

3. Crime Trends

Councillor Bose entered the meeting at 9:06 a.m.

(a) Grow Operations - Update

Corporal John Karlovcec provided information relative to recent initiatives dealing with grow operations in the city as follows:

- That grow operations are a national problem.
- That he has investigated in excess of 1,500 grow operations and is considered a Court expert in indoor and outdoor marijuana cultivation, as well as meth amphetamine and cocaine.
- That meth amphetamine and ecstasy labs are becoming as big a problem as marijuana grow operations.
- That prior to 1997, grow operations were mainly found in older, rental type properties and now they are found in sophisticated new homes in upscale neighbourhoods.
- There is a great deal of money to be made in selling and growing of marijuana.
- That within B.C., the price of marijuana ranges from \$2,200 to \$2,800 per pound. That same pound of marijuana sells for approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000 U.S. in California.
- That discussions with custom officials in North Dakota revealed that one pound of "B.C. Bud" sells for \$8,000 U.S. in Chicago.
- That these grow operations are set up by organized crime groups.
- That to deal with complaints of grow operations in neighbourhoods, the RCMP has started an initiative comprising 25 to 30 officers dedicated to the enforcement of marijuana grow operations and their eradication. This initiative features 5 separate teams of 4 to 5 RCMP members each. They target residential areas and any crime groups that the RCMP is aware of having multiple residences.
- That once these organized crime groups are entrenched it is very difficult to get them out.
- That the RCMP have taken down 40 marijuana grow operations, and arrested 60 people. It was noted that 98% of grow operations are occupied predominantly by Asian organized crime groups.
- That 20,000 marijuana plants have been seized with an estimated street value of \$10 Million to \$13 Million.
- That \$350,000 worth of hydroponic equipment from these residences has been seized as well.
- That B.C. Hydro has located 60% of diverted power due to meter bypasses for grow operations.
- That the theft of electricity puts police and B.C. Hydro officials at risk because the diversions are not grounded property increasing the risk for severe injuries.
- That various weapons have been uncovered during grow operation raids such as baseball bats, handguns, and machetes.
- That children are also living in homes with grow operations (about 33%).
- That there are two RCMP officers within the detachment working on Proceeds of Crime initiative. Owners found with grow operations find their properties restrained, the proceeds of which are subsequently forfeited through the Proceeds of Crime legislation through the Courts. Currently there are 20 separate residences under restraint.
- That the goal is to get all RCMP members trained and on board with the whole process of Proceeds of Crime.

- That this initiative includes partners such as B.C. Hydro, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, banks, home warranty companies, By-law & Licensing, Fire Services, media, Customs and Immigration, and the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board.
- That once a property is under restraint, the owner can be prevented from selling that property and any proceeds from the sale of the home becomes part of the "Proceeds of Crime".

Councillor Priddy entered the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

- That chemicals used to make meth amphetamines are readily available in local stores and the manufacturing process is relatively cheap and profits significant. Instructions to manufacture meth amphetamine may be found on the Internet.
- That the RCMP will look at certain outlets supplying hydroponics equipment knowingly to grow operations.
- That meth amphetamine is growing as the drug of choice, surpassing crack cocaine. Highs from meth amphetamine can last anywhere from 12 to 18 hours and is smokeable, injectable, or may be snorted like crack cocaine. There has been a reported case where the individual was high on meth amphetamine for 5 to 7 days straight.
- That dismantling meth labs is labour intensive, dangerous and requires Health Canada officials to be present due to the explosive nature of the chemicals used.
- That RCMP officers receive training to deal with meth amphetamine users who are considered high risk.

(c) Prostitution

Corporal Tara Roberts was in attendance and provided the following comments:

- That she is one of 3 officers on the Vice Unit, which has been up, and running for 2 years. It was noted that this is Canada's first vice unit for the RCMP and its mandate is to gather intelligence, provide education and enforcement of prostitution and prostitution related offences, procurement and keeping a common body house.

Corporal Karlovcec left the meeting at 9:27 a.m.

- That priorities are the investigation and enforcement of street prostitution and youth exploitation.
- That sex trade consumers identified over the past 12 months resulted in the forwarding of 367 "Dear John" letters and only 1 or 2 Johns were reported as repeat offenders.
- That the Vice Unit charged 13 "Johns" with communication for the purpose of prostitution over the past year.

- That 15 prostitutes were charged with prostitution offences, 12 with breaching probation, and 23 outstanding warrants. Many of these girls were found with drugs on them.
- That 10 pimps were arrested in the past year. It is a difficult process to convict pimps because it is hard to get the girls to come forward and keep on board in order to obtain their statements. Five of these individuals have been deported and 4 are awaiting trial.
- That this year has been successful in the number of pimps arrested - in the previous 9 years, not one pimp was charged.
- That 29 female prostitutes have been registered under the "Next of Kin DNA" initiative should they go missing. This information provides fingerprints, signatures, and DNA evidence. It was also noted that bad date files (girls being attacked by johns) are constantly updated.
- That there is a general misconception on the public's part about chargeable offences. The RCMP cannot arrest someone standing on a street corner who looks like a prostitute. Arrests can only be made for standing offences such as communicating for the purposes of prostitution and must be dealt with under federal and RCMP guidelines.
- That when the RCMP press charges through the Court, area restrictions can be added. When the girls are released, they are back on the streets within a matter of hours and may then be arrested for breaching the area restriction or curfew.
- That prostitutes are being displaced into other areas due to the enforcement initiatives in the Whalley area. This places these girls into darker, more secluded areas resulting in a significant increase in bad date reports.
- That the standard size of an area restriction ranges from 2 to 4 blocks, but occasionally girls are placed on "No Go Surrey" if they live in other municipalities.
- That the "bubble zone" concept is ineffective. It was noted that the RCMP and By-law & Licensing Services need to clarify how the effect of the by-law can best be achieved.
- That the RCMP do provide referrals to prostitutes for drug treatment facilities and other organizations, provide them with phone numbers listing different agencies, bad date line, emergency numbers, and confidential HIV testing.
- That there are facilities to support prostitutes who wish to get out of the sex trade.
- That statistics from Vancouver note that syphilis is reaching epidemic proportions and STD's are also on the increase, representing major public health concerns.

The statement was made that preventative measures such as education is required to get the message out to the public that certain diseases are on the rise because of high risk behaviours. The comment was made that one public health nurse has found that men in certain communities are picking up prostitutes and infecting their spouses. As well, it was added,

education must be provided to children on the dangers of drug abuse, in particular to young runaways. It was noted that until a prostitute says she wants to clean up, there is nothing anyone can do to change her mind.

The comment was made that one line of attack on the John side or youth runaways, is to provide education and preventative measures to get the message out. It was noted that drug use is somewhat glamorized through television and movies and people need to see the reality of the situation.

Supt. Bennett stated that school liaison officers currently provide programs to students on the dangers of drug abuse, starting with marijuana and the progression into meth amphetamines and crack cocaine and the fact that males go into crime and females into prostitution to support their drug habits.

Corporal Roberts left the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

The original agenda order then resumed.

1. Staffing

A/Commr. Forbes commented that there are currently 3 legitimate job vacancies in the Surrey RCMP Detachment and that no staffing action is being taken for operational reasons at this time. The statement was made that new officers are arriving from Williams Lake, Maple Ridge, and Coquitlam.

Discussion ensued relative to the drug enforcement program dealing with grow operations. The statement was made that this major initiative places Surrey on the leading edge to progressively deal with grow operations in a multi-disciplined and integrated approach.

In response to a question regarding staffing numbers, the statement was made that 35 new officers would be on board in 2004 above the 20 originally requisitioned, for a total of 55 officers. A/Commr. Forbes gave assurances that Ottawa, Headquarters, and Regina are all aware of the request for more officers. The comment was made that there are currently 15 members on site to cover for maternity and medical leaves and that if possible, those additional members would be brought on site earlier, if possible.

2. Community Policing

(a) Whalley Clean Sweep

Discussion ensued relative to the Whalley Clean Sweep initiative and the need to expand and sustain these initiatives into the Cedar Hills area.

It was noted that the extraordinary under-spending in the contract occurred as a result of delays incurred in filling the positions and that this contract

savings resulted from a normal turnover of 4% or 5% that occurs in every organization, including the RCMP contract.

A/Commr. Forbes commented that funding for the ODS program is used to support a full RCMP complement. In addition, there is an approved amount of money to be spent and not to be incurred as an under-expenditure.

Supt. Bennett commented on the initiatives of the Whalley Action Committee and Integrated Services Team currently operating in the area, identifying target projects such as the dismantling of crack houses or grow operations. He noted that a number of such facilities have been torn down.

He continued that Council has provided funding for Project Clean Sweep along 135A Street to the end of December 2003. He provided the following comments:

- That a number of city departments and the bike squad are involved in the project.
- That the RCMP have 3 officers working 7 days a week, 18 hours per day to provide coverage along 135A Street.
- That the bike squad and traffic units are hitting the surrounding areas to deal with displaced targets (SkyTrain Station).
- That the problem is being pushed to the Cedar Hills area at 96 Avenue and 128 Street and the RCMP are responding through an enhanced level of presence and enforcement.

Councillor Higginbotham left the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

Mayor McCallum commented that the executive summary of the RCMP's Quarterly Report titled "Public Safety Year to Date Report (January 1st - September 30th, 2003)" should include good news stories regarding the decrease in homicides and robberies.

Councillor Higginbotham returned to the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Relative to statistics, the comment was made that in the interest of ensuring best efforts are made to provide accurate information, a compilation of the first nine months of 2003 has been compared with the same period in the previous year and does not include the benefit of averaging. Supt. Bennett commented that some statistics are not completed "scrubbed" down and are corrected at the end of the year.

Councillor Villeneuve left the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

The suggestion was made to provide semi-annual reports rather than quarterly to provide a more balanced report and finalized statistics.

Councillor Villeneuve returned to the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

A/Commr. Forbes clarified that the third quarterly RCMP statistics report does not contain finalized statistics and is used as a planning tool to provide programs and direction.

Mayor McCallum commented that official figures are available through the Attorney General's office and should be used by the media. He added that the figures indicate positive trends in policing in Surrey over the last few years resulting in reductions in crime overall. He then offered congratulations to the members of the Committee and the RCMP for those proactive approaches dealing with criminal activities, the increase in RCMP officers, and resulting decrease in crime.

Supt. Bennett pointed out that homicides are down from the previous year and the previous year's issues with gang wars have dissipated. He noted that the quarterly report is his compass, which helps direct the deployment of resources to react to pressures as they arise.

It was noted that a lot of good work and strong measures are underway to provide communities in the Whalley area with a greater sense of safety.

(i) Enhanced Policing of Whalley/City Centre

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting, however, further comments were made that the enhanced policing initiative is sustainable through to the end of 2003 and measures are being undertaken to provide funding in the new year.

(b) Cedar Hills

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

3. Crime Trends

(a) Grow Operations

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

(b) Auto Theft

Supt. Bennett commented that the "Hot Wheels Project 2" commenced 6 weeks ago and is a multi-jurisdictional program including Surrey, White Rock, Langley and the Integrated Provincial Auto Theft Task Force. He noted there has been significant success with the program in the targeting and capture of individuals who are known car thieves. He related that the

"Bait Car" program which is sponsored by the province, ICBC and the RCMP would also be underway in early 2004 with training currently underway. He noted that another added opportunity is the significant amount of media coverage of the Bait Car program to promote public awareness.

Discussion ensued with respect to the sustainability of the program and concerns were raised to the lack of deterrents in the court systems for auto theft.

The comment was made that the program is resource intensive and would require additional staff in order to maintain sustainability. The comment was made that it has to be an integrated approach including the province and other municipalities as many autos are stolen from one municipality and dropped off in another.

The comment was made with respect to problems in and around one particular area and Supt. Bennett noted that officers have been increasing their presence in the area, resulting in a safer community.

Supt. Bennett reported that the partners on the Auto Theft Task Force include ICBC, RCMP, the province, Surrey Crime Prevention Society, Langley, White Rock, Surrey, a Court representative and RCMP detachments. He added that it is provincially funded.

The comment was made that some type of immobilization system in automobiles will become mandatory and it was noted that Richmond has a lower auto theft rate due, in part, to the larger number of vehicles with built-in immobilizers. It was noted that ICBC provides a discount to auto owners if their vehicles have an immobilizer.

A/Commr. Forbes noted that the RCMP is dealing with auto theft in an integrated fashion and that the issues of long-term sustainability, immobilizers, and the justice system have to become the focus.

Councillor Priddy commented that people should also take personal responsibility to ensure their vehicles are locked, not left running with the keys in the ignition, and to use deterrents such as clubs. She continued that publicity around auto theft should also mention the personal responsibilities of owners.

Councillor Villeneuve requested that updated population figures also be provided in the executive summary of the quarterly RCMP report. She noted that statistics are greatly influenced by the continuing growth of approximately 10,000 persons per year to this city.

She continued that proactive programs underway in Surrey should be highlighted in the quarterly report.

(c) Prostitution

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting, however, further discussion ensued with the Manager, By-law & Licensing Services noting that some prostitutes live in motels or hotels along King George Highway. He continued that in conjunction with the RCMP, By-law & Licensing Services have set up inspections at motels/hotels with Fraser Health Authority and electrical inspectors as far as meeting the terms of business licensing and zoning issues. He noted that no parking/no stopping signage has been added to some areas by the Engineering Department to deter prostitution.

In response to a question relative to motel/hotel registration requirements, the Manager, By-law & Licensing Services noted that the city could go after hotels that are renting for more than 30 days or by the hour to individuals. In addition, he noted that By-law & Licensing Enforcement meets with management of the hotels/motels that pose problems and may then take enforcement measures through an integrated team of representatives from the Fraser Health Authority, Fire and Safety Inspections.

Councillor Higginbotham noted that the by-law in place works in cooperation with provincial government legislation, requiring posting of the business license in the hotel/motel lobby, keeping a guest register and asking for photo identification.

Councillor Watts left the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

The comment was made that false identification can be purchased easily on the street for \$15.00 and one way to deal with this issue is the requirement for guests to provide two pieces of identification at time of registration.

Councillor Watts returned to the meeting at 10:46 a.m.

Councillor Higginbotham noted that certain crime spots along King George Highway could be eradicated through higher density development such as townhouses. The Manager, By-law & Licensing Services, commented that the highly successful Crime-Free Multi-Family Housing program would be expanded to include hotels and motels.

Councillor Hunt left the meeting at 10:48 a.m. and did not return.

C. BY-LAWS/LEGAL

1. Anti-Bullying/Fighting By-law

The City Solicitor advises that a report dealing with the matter of an Anti-Bullying/Fighting By-law would be presented to the January 2004 Police Committee meeting.

2. Status - Methadone Dispensaries

Item No. PC 001

File: 3900-20-15039

The City Solicitor reported that he had met with the Registrar of the College of Pharmacists. He added that the College has started a Surrey recruitment drive to get the major drugstore chains on board with treatment programs, the advantages of which include longer hours of operation and greater dispersal throughout the Lower Mainland.

He continued that since April of 2003, there has been a 15% reduction in the number of patients being treated in Surrey and a reduction in the number of pharmacies dispensing methadone. He noted that this has occurred in response to an understanding with the province to have treatment more readily available in other communities in the Lower Mainland. He added that this trend is expected to continue and a report would be forwarded to Council early next year providing statistics and distribution patterns.

He noted that one methadone dispensary operating without a business license has been shut down leaving 3 remaining methadone dispensaries in the north end of the city.

Mayor McCallum commented that individuals would be able to seek methadone treatment closer to home through the dispersal of dispensaries throughout the community. The statement was made that the majority of patients on methadone must continue the treatment for life.

It was Moved by Councillor Higginbotham
Seconded by Councillor Steele
That the City Solicitor's report relative to
methadone dispensaries be received.

Carried

3. Regulating Lighting Pollution

The City Solicitor advises that a report on the Richmond Hills, Ontario By-law regarding lighting pollution in residential areas has been forwarded to the Engineering and Planning & Development Departments for review.

D. OUTSTANDING ITEMS

E. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

1. 2004 Meeting Schedule

The statement was made that staff would provide available dates to the Clerk's Department in order to set up meetings for 2004.

2. Terms of Reference (Appendix A)

The following comments were made relative to the Police Committee Terms of Reference:

- That **Item 3. Meeting Dates** be amended to include the following:

"...with no less than one meeting every two months."

It was	Moved by Councillor Steele
	Seconded by Councillor Higginbotham
	That the Police Committee Terms of
Reference, as amended, be forward to	Council for approval and adoption.
	<u>Carried</u>

F. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date to be determined.

G. ADJOURNMENT

It was	Moved by Councillor Higginbotham
	Seconded by Councillor Priddy
	That the Police Committee meeting do now
adjourn.	
	<u>Carried</u>

The meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Councillor G. Tymoschuk, Chair
Police Committee