



City of Surrey

Social Planning Committee

Minutes

Executive Boardroom
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2004
Time: 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Chairperson - Councillor J. Villeneuve
S. Blown
J. Brown
S. DeRapp

Absent:

R. Day
J. Grafton
A. Khanzadeh
S. Moore

Staff Present:

B. Beblo, Planning & Development
L. White, Parks, Recreation & Culture
K. Miller, Administrative Assistant

Also Present:

L. Vincent, Community Liaison

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Social Planning Committee Minutes - December 4, 2003

It was Moved by J. Brown
Seconded by S. DeRapp
That the minutes of the Social Planning
Committee meeting held on December 4 2003, be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

- 1.** Debbie Bell, Executive Director, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) of Canada, and Sahra-Lea Tosdevine-Tataryn, Coordinator, Tom Binnie Park Community Centre, provided an overview of this national program designed to maximize the educational potential of young children at-risk. The program encompasses helping parents learn how to teach their pre-school children at home. In Canada, the following cities offer home instruction programs for children: Vancouver, Halifax, Victoria and Vancouver Aboriginal Consortium, and the Konawache and Blueberry First Nations. Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal are investigating sites.

The following items were presented:

- HIPPY was developed in Israel thirty years ago as a government funded national program;
- Programs are currently operating in Australia, Canada, El Salvador, France, Germany, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States;
- Programs still exist in Turkey and the Netherlands based on the HIPPY model;
- Programs are under development in Ethiopia, France and Singapore;
- The outcomes of the home instruction program include facilitating active participation of multi-cultural families, improving the well-being of Canadian

immigrant and refugee children, reducing social isolation and foster parent involvement in schools and the community, supporting the role of parents as the child's first educator, improving the academic performance of children in school, and promoting child/parent interaction;

- Basic assumptions of parenting include wanting the best for their children, teaching their own children, parent-child interaction and bonding, and parents teaching parents;
- Parents who live on low income with age 3, 4, or 5 year old children, who have made a decision to participate in the child's education;
- Parents make a time commitment of 15 minutes a day to read and learn with their children. The program runs for 30 weeks;
- Coordinators of the program are paid professionals and hold a degree in early childhood development, education, social work or adult education. They have prior experience in working with communities and/or community based projects. Coordinators are able to promote an inter-agency relations, and demonstrate empathy understanding causes of and solutions to people poverty;
- Coordinators work directly with the parents and home visitors;
- Structured curriculum prepares children for the expectations of school. It develops 25 different cognitive skills, using 20 different activities which move from easy to more difficult. Each successive week builds on the skills learned the week before;
- It was noted that on nearly every measure taken, the children in this program performed or were rated the most favorably of all groups;
- Goals of the program include increasing centre-based instruction in the second year, i.e., alternating weekly visits between the home and the centre. Parents participate in more activities outside their home, seek educational programs for their own advancement, are more likely to seek employment, and are more active in community affairs;
- The cost for providing services to 70 families is approximately \$130,000 per year;
- The program also provides employment and training to parents; and
- The program facilitate the active participation of parents and their children from multi-cultural communities in Canadian society by utilizing community outreach strategies for new immigrant and refugee families, ensuring that the home visitor speaks the parent's first language, connecting immigrant and refugee parents with other families, and linking parents with community resources and support systems.

There followed a general discussion relative to the following:

- Measures in place to provide continuous services to families who relocate frequently;
 - Readiness of children entering the school system;
 - Children Under Six programs; and
 - Surrey's broad cultural spectrum.
-
- It was suggested that the HIPPY program join the Make Children First Table, a sub-committee of the CYC to integrate the initiative with other early

childhood development programs being developed in Surrey and to leverage limited funding to reach as many families as possible.

The delegation withdrew from the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

2. Soraya Wicks, Program Coordinator, Newton Advocacy Group Society, was in attendance to discuss the implementation of the time limit under the BC Income Assistance program and the pending impact on individuals, the community and service providers.

The following items were discussed:

- In April 2002, legislation relative to income assistance was enacted;
- Among the changes were the lengthening waiting period (at least four weeks), more stringent criteria for acceptance;
- Emergency needs assessments, requirement to prove two-year independent living as a pre-requisite to receiving any assistance;;
- Boundaries relative to long term illness or dependency on government systems;
- Crisis grants, for shelter and food, removal of workers' discretion in determining the amount of funding provided in the case of an emergency;
- Earnings exemptions were removed;
- Maintenance exemptions were removed;
- Rates for support and shelter were decreased;
- Single parents of more than one child were hit hardest;
- Homemaker services were discontinued;
- Discharge benefits were discontinued;
- Employment related start-up costs were implemented;
- Disability status criteria were amended with respect to the following categories: "employability screen", "no employment obligation", "persons with persistent multiple barriers", and "persons with disability status";
- The introduction of the 24-Month out of 60-Month Rule: a person cannot receive income assistance for more than 24 months out of a total of 60 consecutive months;
- In order to continue to receive assistance, all employable persons are now required to enter into an employment plan. Some have been directed to work programs, others to independent searches. If two employment planning meetings are missed, that person's eligibility is dismissed;
- If a person leaves a job, that person is disqualified from receiving benefits;
- Persons exempt: pregnant women, children under 18, single parents with children under the age of three or parents of children with disabilities, spouses caring for disabled partners, hospitalized persons, medical or mental health conditions, treatment programs, those leaving abusive relationships within the last six months, ESL programs, persons over 65, person having hardship (immigrant status);
- Employment and assistance rates;
- Reduction in assistance (See Appendix A);

- Persons coming off the assistance beginning in the spring of 2004 are not offered any options for assistance, and it is expected that homelessness will rise significantly over time, as more people run out of options; and
- 14,000 people accessed the Surrey Food Bank and similar agencies in December 2003 this number is also expected to rise significantly during 2004; and .
- Persons on income assistance are required to be registered with a local food bank.

There followed a general discussion relative to the following:

- Results of reduction to assistance;
- Accumulation of shortfall, which has manifested within the last six to eight months; and
- Providing basic needs as a short-term solution.

The delegation withdrew from the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

3. Pat Petrela, and Margaret Lower, Semiahmoo Planning Group, and Annie McKitrick, Surrey Social Futures, were in attendance to provide an overview of the Semiahmoo Planning Group and its activities.

The following issues were discussed:

- Projects underway include gathering demographic data on the Semiahmoo Peninsula in order to update the Community Impact Profile;
- Community development initiative, which will engage the community and collect information with a view to holding a community forum to make decisions about the community's future;
- Community Action Group activities;
- Panel on Poverty;
- Enhancing community awareness; and
- Learning how to meet the needs of the community.

The delegation withdrew at 8:45 p.m.

It was

Moved by S Blown

Seconded by J. Brown

That the Social Planning Committee receive

the information presented by the above delegations.

Carried

C. DISCUSSION OF DELEGATIONS

D. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. The committee reviewed Surrey's Homelessness Plan. Councillor Villeneuve noted that the Homelessness Task Force presented the Plan to Council on January 19, 2003, and that the Plan was generally well received. Councillor Villeneuve also noted that the Taskforce has funds to continue to work with the consultants to develop an action plan for the Plan.

E. NEW BUSINESS

F. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

G. UPDATES

1. Surrey/White Rock: Child, Youth & Family Network: Aly Khanzadeh provided a written summary of his attendance at the CYC meeting noting activities of the "Make Children First" learning initiative, the Family Place Network and Ministry of Children and Family Development
2. Highland House - Shelter Advisory Committee (SAC): Councillor Villeneuve informed the committee that both the shelter and transitional housing units are fully occupied and Council continues to be encouraged how will the facility operating. . There followed a general discussion relative to the success of Highland House and need for additional services to mitigate homelessness.

H. CORRESPONDENCE

I. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. HIPPY Canada, Program Brochure.
2. BC's Two Year Welfare Time Limit, Information Bulletin, prepared by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC, December 2003.
3. New Study confirms gross inadequacy of BC welfare rates, News release, Social Planning and Research Council of BC, May 2003.
4. Defining and measuring poverty, Background, Social Planning and Research Council of BC, May 2003.
5. For more information on BC Income Assistance visit the Ministry of Human Resources Website at www.gov.bc.ca/mhr.
6. Semiahmoo Planning Group, Terms of Reference, Community Project.

7. UPDATE, Newsletter, South Fraser Women's Services Society.
8. Utilizing Participatory Research in the Homelessness Population, Research Workshop and Community Consultation, Tuesday, February 10, 2004, 1:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m., South Fraser Community Services.

J. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

K. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Social Planning Committee is scheduled from Thursday, February 26, 2004.

L. ADJOURNMENT

It was

meeting do now adjourn.

Moved by J. Brown
Seconded by S. DeRapp
That the Social Planning Committee

Carried

The Social Planning Committee adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Chairperson