

Present:

Councillor Gill - Chair
Mayor Watts
Councillor Hepner
Councillor Rasode
Councillor Hunt
Councillor Martin
Councillor Steele

**Councillors Entering
Meeting as Indicated:**

Councillor Bose: 5:05 p.m.

Absent:

Councillor Villeneuve

Staff Present:

City Manager
General Manager, Finance & Technology
City Clerk
General Manager, Investment and
Intergovernmental
General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Planning &
Development
General Manager, Parks, Recreation &
Culture
General Manager, Human Resources
City Solicitor
Deputy City Manager
Manager, Area Planning & Development,
South Division
Manager, Area Planning & Development,
North Division
Land Development Engineer

A. PUBLIC INPUT ON CORPORATE REPORTS

Item No. Fo17 2010 Five-Year (2010 - 2014) Financial Plan - General Operating
File: 1705-05

Item No. Fo18 2010 Five-Year (2010 - 2014) Financial Plan - Utilities
File: 1705-05

Item No. Fo19 2010 Five-Year (2010 - 2014) Financial Plan - Capital Program
File: 1705-05

Eric Wilson, Chair, Surrey Board of Trade ("SBT") Finance & Taxation Team, 14439 - 104
Street, stated:

- SBT shares City of Surrey desires to attract new investment to Surrey and to meet the needs of the existing business community;
- SBT applauds the City in adopting new and innovative job creation and investment initiatives to ensure that Surrey is top of mind when businesses, regionally and globally, are seeking to invest in this region;
- Through SBT's business services and the City's creative vision, together we are building BC's next great metro centre;
- SBT monitors public sector spending in order to suggest how to maximize the productivity of the local economy and encourage growth in the private section;

- SBT is the 2nd largest business Board of Trade/Chamber of Commerce in BC, representing over 3,600 business contacts, which in turn represent over 31,000 employees;
- SBT through the City's quarterly public disclosure process was able to learn early in the year how Surrey responded in the first 90 days of a recessionary economy;
- SBT commends the City for responding promptly to economic challenges by reducing the 2009 revenue expectations and reducing expenditures;
- SBT encourages more resources (financial and human) be provided to the Crime Reduction Strategy and encourage the City to work with the RCMP to ensure the performance is reported on a timely basis;
- SBT supports the re-development of City Centre into a downtown core;
- under the expenditure area of city beautification, SBT notes that the line item for City beautification increases \$462,000 in 2010 and then on available \$1.3 million per year from 2011 to 2014, SBT showcases and welcomes international businesses into the City and support this new program;
- SBT commends Surrey for being the only major City in BC, and perhaps in Canada, to publish quarterly financial report on its website;
- SBT views the 2010 planned rate increase of 4% (approximately \$8 million), to be unrealistic, SBT believes that Council should take a stronger line on how much it takes out of taxpayers monies in 2010 and a zero rate increase is possible;
- SBT recommends that Surrey review the Class 4 tax burden ratio to improve tax ratios, this will assist businesses to come into the area and thus increase jobs;
- SBT has urged the City to continue their focus on keeping traffic moving; the current Highway 99A exchange, the SBT Transportation team will work with the City to help find a solution or options for improved traffic flow;
- SBT urges the City to find a solution to alleviate traffic on 88 Avenue, without delay, for effective movement of goods and services; a solution for this can be expensed through the City's Arterial Road budget;
- SBT Environment Team supported the City's Sustainability Charter and has been involved in its creation through the consultation phase of development;
- SBT applauds the Sustainability line item in the general operating expenditures that is being increased;
- SBT is a proponent of a blue box recycling program for businesses and knows that Metro Vancouver and Surrey are looking at options for a mandatory business recycling program;
- SBT ask that the business community be consulted on how the fee/levy will be applied to business depending on waste/recycle output;
- SBT congratulates the City's successful management of its overall fiscal matters; comparatively to other BC metro cities, Surrey has the lowest operating spending per capita, a conservative investment policy and no long term debt;
- SBT on behalf of its membership will continue to work with the City to make Surrey a great place to live, learn, work and play.

Peter Maarsman, President of Green Timbers Heritage Society ('GTH'), stated:

- GTH appreciated that Council has approved the building of the Surrey Nature's Centre, which has become one of the most successful programs in Surrey;
- school programs are booked to attend the Nature's Centre programs at least six months in advance;
- last year the Nature Centre lost \$75,000 from their budget and as a result they lost one of their staff members, he suggested that the funding be picked up by the City again;

- there is a future program that the Nature Centre is trying to develop which will have ponds and streams, and would become one of the showcases of Surrey;
- every program at the Nature Centre is overbooked because it is so successful;
- he again urged Council to provide funding to the Nature Centre, Parks, Recreation and Environmental programs. The City funds the Nature Centre through their Environmental Division.
- The \$10,000 dollars from the Province is usually used to purchase education materials for the Nature Centre.

Rosemary Zelinka, #12 - 14065 Nico Wynd Place, Coordinator, Surrey Association for Sustainable Communities ('ASC'), stated:

- ASC is an umbrella group for community associations and groups, representing approximately 20 community associations;
- ASCs purpose is to further the livability and sustainability of communities;
- ASC with the help of a grant from the United Way, has been encouraging community groups to form or revitalize to undertake projects in their communities, and to build community spirit and neighborliness, to the benefit of everyone;
- ASC Renewing Newton Neighbourhoods project in Newton last Spring proved very successful in community capacity building, however there are issues regarding funding of these activities;
- ASC appreciates the general increase in interest shown by this Council in community development and capacity building;
- ASC has three suggestions for improvement to the 2010-2014 Financial Plan, as follows:
 - Neighbourhood Matching Grants – ASC is pleased to learn of Council's decision of the above program, with funding of \$25,000 per year, ASC would request that any funds remaining this year be carried over to the next year, so that up to \$50,000 would be available for 2010; request that Council, when it approves the detailed criteria for assisting grant applications, ensure that it includes small grants to help new community groups form and organize themselves, as the criteria is to help existing organizations;
 - Free meeting space – ASCs requests that Council give consideration to providing free meeting space for community groups in City facilities, or make funding available for community groups to rent space for meetings in other local facilities, e.g. schools, places of worship; ASC urges Council to act on these comments by adding funds into the Financial Plan;
 - Insurance – ASC strongly supports the possibility of the City covering the insurance needs of recognized community associations, general liability insurance required per year is beyond the capabilities of most individual community associations, insurance for Board directors costs are \$1,000 for a few associations that can afford it,
- ASC believes that umbrella coverage for all recognized community associations would be a considerable cost saving and would help the viability and members of these organizations, therefore ASC requests the City include these insurance costs in its financial plan.

In response to questions the delegation stated: Even at nominal rental rates the fees for meeting spaces will add up to \$300/\$400 dollars a year, which is money the community associations may not have. ASC is an umbrella group that does not get involved unless issues are City wide or ASC will lobby at the memberships request, the community associations under the umbrella are area based associations that have a prime interest on the betterment of their area.

Staff advised that community space is available at many recreational facilities that is provided at a nominal cost at a nonprofit (community use) meeting room space rate.

It was

Moved by Councillor Bose

Seconded by Mayor Watts

That the submission from Rosemary Zelinka,

be received.

Carried

Deb Jack, President, Surrey Environmental Partners ('SEP'), 7680 – 143 Street, stated:

- SEP in a nonprofit organization serving as an umbrella for people and organizations that are interested in natural areas;
- SEPs primary focus is Surrey;
- SEP is associated with organizations with jurisdictions in Surrey, such as the Evergreen and the Land Conservancy;
- SEPs main activities are education and advocacy, and some restoration;
- Groups that are involved with SEP – Grandview Heights Community Connection, Port Kells Community Association, Friends of Kennedy Park, Friends of Semiahmoo Heritage Trail, South Westminster Ratepayers Association, Little Campbell Enhancement Society, Serpentine Enhancement Society, White Rock/Surrey Naturalists, Sunnyside Acres Heritage Society, Robson Creek Stream Keepers, Friends of Guildford Wetlands, Green Timbers Heritage Society, Green Ideas Network Rescue, Ocean Park Community Association, and Fraser Heights Wetlands;
- SEPs vision is a community where nature will flourish, this vision becomes more important and imperative to be considering in light of what we are going to experience in climate change;
- SEP and its members have actively participated in the sustainability charter undertaking and also participating in the targets and indicators development process, SEP is involved in the ecosystem management review and are part of the stakeholders committee;
- SEP participates in Surrey's Earth Day and Ocean Day;
- SEPs concerns are:
 - in capital expenditures SEP would like to see the development of three large natural area parks, which could be termed as 'living legacy' parks and a marine rivers centre;
 - SEP would like to see greater concern in the operations areas and resources for natural areas and park maintenance and an environmental planner;
 - SEP is pleased to see that Surrey is having an ecosystem management review to update the environmentally sensitive report that was done in 1990 and understands that this will be part of the Official Community Plan;
 - in operating expenditures, maintenance of the natural park areas specifically in regards to invasive plants.

In response to questions, the delegation stated: The City has had for a number of years a brochure regarding invasive plants, and the City provides this information at events such as Earth Day; there are a few nurseries that have notices posted with regards to not putting the waste of their hanging basket into natural areas; SEP is always in support of further education however money should be directed to the current problems of invasive plants in natural park areas.

Councillor Hunt requested that White Rock be included in the comparison 'per capita' as noted on page nine of Corporate Report F017 in Appendix C.

Councillor Bose noted that the City has utility fees in addition to the general revenues and some municipalities do not incorporate utility fees into their general revenue and he then requested staff to provide a graph showing the property assessment base as a separate levy and add in the additional levies, to provide benchmarks for comparison.

The Chair advised that the Finance Committee meeting of Tuesday, November 3, 2009 is now rescheduled to 1:30 p.m. on Monday, November 23, 2009, and Council will consider the Finance Corporate Reports at this meeting.

B. ADJOURNMENTS

It was

Moved by Councillor Hepner
Seconded by Councillor Steele
That the Finance Committee meeting do

now adjourn.

Carried

The Finance Committee adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

Councillor Gill, Chairperson
Finance Committee