
Present:

Chair, Councillor Villeneuve
A. Begalka
S. Dooley
S. MacKinnon
C. Mohr
A. Quiroz
L. Rhead
M. Shaw

Absent:

W. Al-Jabiri
J. Sturge
K. Thiara
D. Toor
J. Liu (Youth Representative)
M. Tutt (Youth Representative)

Staff Present:

A. Murphy, Senior Social Planner
K. Patten, Social Planning
L. Luaifoa, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Social Policy Advisory Committee Minutes of March 2, 2016 to be adopted.

It was

Moved by S. Dooley

Seconded by A. Begalka

That the Social Policy Advisory Committee Minutes of

March 2, 2016, be adopted.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

1. **Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Strategy Update**

Sheldon Tetreault, Guerin Tetreault Governance Consulting, presented an update on the report, All Our Relations: Phase 1 of the Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Strategy.

Prior to introducing Sheldon Tetreault, Councillor LeFranc acknowledged the First Nation territories of Tsawwassen, Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen and Qayqayt.

The following comments were made:

- A number of Surrey reports have acknowledged the need to develop culturally appropriate services for the Aboriginal community.
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) traveled across Canada speaking with Residential School survivors and documenting their stories. Over a century, 150,000 Aboriginal children were taken from their homes and placed into Residential Schools. Although the schools are closed now, the legacy of Residential Schools continues to reverberate through the communities and families. The TRC put out a Call of Action to all Canadians and governments, including local governments, to join others on the path of Reconciliation. The report - All Our Relations is part of a response to that Call to Action.

- The objective of the Surrey Aboriginal Social Innovation Strategy project is to build and strengthen relationships at all levels of the community to improve the economic participation, educational attainment and healthy outcomes for the Aboriginal population in Surrey.
- As part of the project, the Surrey Aboriginal Leadership Committee was formed. It is chaired by Councillor LeFranc and consists of individuals and organizations that share a commitment to improving the lives of urban Aboriginal people in Surrey. The City extended an invitation to all of the Aboriginal agencies and local First Nations to join the Leadership Committee and also a few key non-Aboriginal organizations such as the Surrey School District and Fraser Health. The Aboriginal Leadership Committee was instrumental in providing the project team with direction on how to go about doing the research and consultations and validating the findings of the work.
- Focus groups were organized with Aboriginal residents of Surrey and interviews were conducted with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations that interact with the Aboriginal community in Surrey.
- The final report of the project includes 14 key findings. A few examples of the findings are as follows:
 - **Finding #2** – It is estimated the current size of the Aboriginal population in Surrey has surpassed the Aboriginal population in Vancouver and will grow exponentially over the next 15 years. (Currently, there are an estimated 15,000 Aboriginal people residing in Surrey)
 - **Finding #5** – The Aboriginal population in Surrey is significantly younger than the non-Aboriginal population in Surrey and Metro Vancouver. Aboriginal youth face unique challenges with personal safety, police relations, and age appropriate services. (Half of the Aboriginal population is under the age of 26 in Surrey which is significantly younger than the average age of the population in Metro Vancouver which is 40 years)
 - **Finding #9** – The majority of Aboriginal people that move to Surrey, stay in the city. Home ownership levels among Aboriginal households in Surrey are much higher as compared to Aboriginal households in Vancouver (45% of Aboriginal households in Surrey are owners versus 23% of Aboriginal households in Vancouver). More Aboriginal-specific housing options are needed for renters and the homeless. Phase 1 of the project developed a demographic profile of the Aboriginal population in Surrey and through community consultations identified 14 key findings and associated conclusions.
- Phase 2 of the project will include work to develop strategies that address the key findings and conclusions.
- The Committee acknowledged the City and commended the report and the facilitators, noting the amount of information provided was surprising.
- The Committee expressed appreciation for including the local First Nations on whose traditional territory Surrey is located. Although there are 6 or 7 territories, the term Coast Salish refers to all of those Nations in the Lower Mainland.

- It was noted that Aboriginal Day is June 21 and the Committee advised that the City of Vancouver hosts a large pow wow each year on Aboriginal Day and it was suggested that the City consider exploring options to host a larger event in recognition of Aboriginal Day in future years.

The delegation was thanked for their presentation.

1. READ Surrey/White Rock Society

Shanti Ang, Literacy Outreach Coordinator, READ Surrey/White Rock Society, provided a presentation on the mandate of READ Surrey/White Rock Society.

The following comments were made:

- READ Surrey/White Rock is a non-profit organization that receives provincial funding and support by donations and in-kind support. The objective of the society is to raise awareness of literacy and help people develop literacy skills.
- Literacy is the ability to understand and employ information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community – to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential. It is important to note that it is not about whether one can read, write and compute but how well one does this and if it is good enough, for example, to get and keep a job.
- Essential skills are the skills needed for work, learning and life. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills. Statistics show that 40% of BC adults do not have the skills necessary to read a newspaper, fill out a work application form, read a map or understand a lease. 49% of BC adults do not have the skills necessary to calculate a tip, create a budget, calculate sales tax or understand credit cards interest rates.
- Low literacy is a huge problem in BC but a largely hidden one because of the stigma associated with it. People are reluctant to admit they can't read or write well. The impacts are that people with low literacy skills have a hard time navigating the legal system – filling out forms, answering questionnaires, understanding notices of hearing or meetings and sometimes non-compliance is low literacy.
- Literacy skills in seniors may decline with age due to health problems and lack of use. It is important to keep up skills.
- Low literacy is due to a number of reasons including learning disabilities, school drop-out, poverty, lack of opportunity, lack of support at home, severe childhood illness, drug and/or alcohol abuse or being pushed through school but not having the skills to progress.
- READ Surrey/White Rock raises awareness through presentations and connections with other organizations to reach those who need help. These presentations will help people become more involved and reducing the stigma.

- The Partners Adult Literacy Tutoring Program consists of a tutor and learner meeting weekly in a public setting to develop a learning plan over a minimum of three months. The organization provides a notebook, pens and if available – dictionaries and bus tickets. The goal is to improve literacy skills to enable learners to feel better about themselves and assist with goals such as passing a driving knowledge test, filling out various applications or writing exams etc.
- READ Surrey/White Rock welcomes partnerships with other groups to raise the awareness of the problems and solutions of literacy. Raising awareness also helps reduce the stigma.

The delegation was thanked for their presentation.

3. **Gro-Carts - Urban Food Security on Wheels**

Katie Elliott provided a presentation on Gro-Carts to the Committee.

The following comments were made:

- Gro-Carts are decommissioned grocery carts that are donated for planting foods such as potatoes, radishes, lettuce, kale, spinach, etc. The cart is aligned with straw and hay which helps to hold the soil in the cart and enable irrigation to pass through.
- This alternative method of gardening is for people who do not have access to garden space. Tammas Grogan, Founder has experimented for 3 years with soil levels, different crops and crop irrigation to find the right formula that works.
- The delegation thanked the Committee for their support to be able to make a presentation about the Gro-Carts and asked that members spread the word about the project.

C. **OUTSTANDING BUSINESS**

1. **Refugee Transportation Loan Petition Update**

- Councillor Villeneuve reported that on February 23, 2016, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration discussed the refugee loan as a possible study topic for the Committee. Unfortunately the motion to review the loan was defeated.
- MP Randeep Sarai has the petitions with the 1,000+ signatures calling for the elimination of the requirement for refugees to repay transportation loans. He will present the petitions to the House of Commons at some time in the near future.
- The abolishment of the loan will continue to be pursued despite the recent disappointment.

2. Syrian Refugee Update

Aileen Murphy, Senior Social Planner provided the following update:

- A copy of a recent report to Council is included in the agenda package. It summarizes what the City of Surrey has done in response to the arrival of Syrian refugees.
- In March, staff training sessions were organized. One session was at the Works Yard and a session at City Hall. The purpose of the session was to raise awareness about Middle East culture, the arrival of refugees and to also see if staff was interested in assisting in any way.
- A follow-up session is being planned with staff who expressed an interest in taking action. A number of options of ways to help will be provided including volunteering (to be a host or a conversation circle volunteer) or to organize donations for a specific family. The City is starting to look at hosting a welcome event for all refugees at City Hall in July.

3. Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)

Aileen Murphy, Senior Social Planner provided the following update:

- The LIP has been in existence for 2 years. Through the contract with the Federal Government, LIP developed its Strategic Plan that will be presented to Council on May 30.
- Refugee research has been completed by SFU Surrey and in the next 6 months, a Surrey Refugee Integration Strategic Plan will be developed.
- The Federal Government has extended Surrey's LIP contract for another year.

4. 2016 Doors Open

Councillor Villeneuve provided the following update:

- The June 18 event is from 10 am to 3 pm and will focus on the following areas in Surrey: City Centre, Newton, Cloverdale, and South Surrey.
- Trolleys and buses will be available to take people to the different locations.

D. NEW BUSINESS**1. BC Poverty Reduction Coalition**

File: 0250-07 UBCM

The Committee is requested to forward a recommendation for Council to support the submission of a resolution to UBCM to call for a Poverty Reduction Plan for British Columbia.

RECOMMENDATION

It was Moved by Councillor LeFranc
Seconded by A. Quiroz
That the Social Policy Advisory Committee
recommends that Council:

1. Endorse the following resolution:

WHEREAS the poverty rate in British Columbia continues to be among the highest in Canada yet BC is the last province in Canada to have a commitment to a poverty reduction plan;

AND WHEREAS many impacts of poverty are experienced at the local level, and local residents pay for poverty in increased health care costs, higher crime, higher demand for community, social and charitable services, lack of school readiness, reduced school success, and lower economic productivity;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities urge the Government of BC to follow the lead of all other provinces by adopting a comprehensive and accountable provincial poverty reduction strategy to reduce the number of people living in poverty in BC by setting concrete targets and timelines to reduce poverty.

2. Authorize staff to forward the "A Poverty Reduction Plan for British Columbia" (Appendix 1) as part of the 2016 UBCM Resolution process.

Carried

2. **Updates on City's Digital Inclusion Initiatives**

Kristen Patten, Social Planning, provided the following update:

- One of the projects the City is engaged in is bridging the digital divide for those who don't have access to the internet. Every few years, the City upgrades their computers, cells and laptops. Social Planning staff has been working with IT to utilize the used equipment to benefit those in need. Two groups that have been identified to receive recycled items are vulnerable women and refugees. The cell phones were targeted for the women and the computers/laptops to the refugees. The phones will enable street-engaged women to make a 911 call if they are unsafe, and the recycled computers and laptops will help with integration for the refugees and assist with school work.
- In response to an inquiry if there is a designated place for donated computers/laptops, staff advised that the option for receiving donations has not yet been explored. It was noted that when computers are used, it can take a lot of time to ensure the devices are cleared properly. It was noted that the recycling of used City equipment can result in positive social change.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

There were no items referred by Council.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

There is no correspondence.

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. All Our Relations: Phase 1 of the Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Strategy.
2. A Profile of the Aboriginal Population in Surrey.
3. Surrey Local Immigration Partnership Newsletter: Engaged & Inclusive: Surrey & Syria
4. Surrey Local Immigration Partnership Quick Study: Our Refugee Settlement Plan: A Progress Report on research and Consultation.
5. Corporate Report No. Ro89, April 18, 2016. Update on the Arrival of Syrian Refugees.
6. Doors Open flyer

It was

Moved by M. Shaw

Seconded by C. Mohr

That the Social Policy Advisory Committee receives

the above noted Information Items.

Carried

H. OTHER BUSINESS**1. Committee Member Updates**

Councillor LeFranc reported that the City is working with Fraser Health to address the issue of overdoses that are occurring in large numbers due to fentanyl. The BC Centre for Disease Control is organizing a full day workshop on June 9, 2016 regarding this issue. Councillor LeFranc and Aileen Murphy will be attending. The Committee should consider inviting a delegation to present on the issue.

2. 2016 SPAC Fun Schedule

The Committee suggested that a presentation for LIP be made at a future SPAC meeting.

I. NEXT MEETING

The next Social Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 6, 2016 in room 2E Community Room A.

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by S. Dooley


Seconded by M. Shaw

That the Social Policy Advisory Committee meeting do


now adjourn.

Carried

The Social Policy Advisory Committee adjourned at 6: 55 pm.



Jane Sullivan, City Clerk



Chairperson, Councillor J. Villeneuve
Social Policy Advisory Committee