
Monday, March 27, 2000

Council Chamber
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
Monday, March 27, 2000
Time: 5:40 p.m.

Present:

Acting Mayor Higginbotham - Chair
Mayor McCallum
Councillor Villeneuve
Councillor Tymoschuk
Councillor Steele
Councillor Eddington
Councillor Bose
Councillor Hunt

Absent:

Councillor Watts

Staff Present:

City Manager
City Clerk
C. Bonneville, Administrative Assistant

A. CORPORATE REPORTS

There were no Corporate Reports.

B. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

There were no items referred by Council.

C. DELEGATIONS

1. Karen Kristianson

Soroptimist International of White Rock

File: 0065-012; 0864-003

Mavis Dunsford, President, Soroptimist International of White Rock (SIWR), was in attendance to make a presentation regarding their organization and achievements. She introduced Christina McLellan, First Vice-president and Lynn Anderson one of the Directors of SIWR.

She provided an overview of who the Soroptimists are, stating that in 1921 eighty working women joined together to blend their community and service concerns with social and business interests. Among these women there was a physician, a laboratory technician, a printer and a confectioner. The name Soroptimist is derived from two Latin words "Soro" and "Optima" meaning "the best for women". These eighty women laid the foundation for what would become an internationally recognized service organization 'Soroptimist International'. Today there are over 100,000 members in 114 countries whose sole purpose is to improve the quality of life for their fellow human beings.

Soroptimists are business and professional women of all ages, cultures and ethnic groups. Soroptimists

are leaders in their communities and contribute time and financial support to community based and international projects. Soroptimists believe that by promoting awareness and providing advocacy they can prove a catalyst for positive lasting changes in people's lives.

While Soroptimist projects vary in nature, and range from the needs of vulnerable populations to the environment, the heart of the Soroptimist mission is to make a difference for women.

Mavis Dunsford stated that since 1921 many things in the world have changed for women, notable milestones have included the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights decreeing all acts of violence as a denial of the rights of individuals to "life, liberty and security of person". In 1993 the World Conference on Human Rights called for the elimination of violence against women in public and private life. The same year the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the declaration on the elimination of violence against women describing violence against women as "one of the crucial mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate positions". As a result of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1990 World Summit for Children, international attention has been directed to the needs of the girl child.

Gender statistics, which were scant before the UN decade for women, from 1979 to 1985, have helped promote a more realistic assessment of the contributions of women to society. The continuing advocacy and analysis by the UN have helped shift international and national attention to addressing the issue of equal rights for women as a means of solving a number of socio-economic problems. With eighty percent of the work of the UN now devoted to development activities, women are fast becoming key beneficiaries of aid, in such areas as health, education and the environment. The UN Development Fund for Women, working in partnership with the UN development program, provides direct financial and technical support to development projects for women in developing countries. Soroptimist International holds a seat on the UN as a non-governmental organization with general consultative status.

She stated that on March 29 of this year, SIWR celebrates its fifty birthday. Fifty years of business and professional women of various ages and backgrounds blending community and service concerns with social and business interest "to foster the ideal of service". When SIWR was first chartered they were truly an international chapter with members from Surrey, White Rock, Blaine, and Washington.

Over the years SIWR has supported many of the local agencies such as: the Fraser Valley Cancer Centre, the Peace Arch Hospital, special equipment requests, the Peace Arch Community Services, the South Fraser Community Services, various women safe houses, senior facilities, the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Holly Hjorth Community Kitchen, Reconnect, Breast Cancer Seminars, Come Share, and many other organizations which have come to SIWR for support.

Annually SIWR gives a "Women's Opportunity Award" to a woman who is wishing to re-enter the work force and is upgrading her skills, in many cases the winner is a single parent. The Youth Citizenship Award is given to a student who best exemplifies leadership at school, community service and citizenship. This program awards good deeds rather than academic achievement. SIWR also gives each of the high schools in White Rock area a scholarship for a graduating student to assist them in furthering their education.

Presently the SIWR is focusing on two continuing advocacy programs "Violence against Women and Children" and "Seniors Abuse" areas which are very much in the fore front today.

As SIWR enters a new millennium they encourage Council to remember that individually and collectively we can make a difference in the lives of all individuals and in the kind of world we live in now and will inhabit in the future. SIWR believes this is best summarized in this quote from the UN Charter - "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person,

in equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and.... for these ends, to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours."

Ms. Dunsford thanked Council for recognizing the fifty years of service of the SIWR, and invited Council to celebrate with them in their good works, their good thoughts, their good times and especially their fiftieth Birthday.

Councillor Villeneuve thanked the Soroptimists for their efforts and queried how many members the White Rock Chapter had, Ms. Dunsford replied that there are currently twenty-nine members. Councillor Villeneuve suggested that the organization recruit younger members, to carry on the good work of the organization, Ms. Dunsford replied that many women in the thirty to forty age category have children and cannot commit their time to volunteer work.

The Chair thanked the delegation for their presentation.

D. DELEGATION REQUESTS

There were no delegation requests.

E. COUNCIL MEMBERS REPORTS

There were no Council members' reports.

F. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was no other competent business.

G. ADJOURNMENT

It was Moved by Councillor Hunt
Seconded by Councillor Tymoschuk
That the Council-in-Committee meeting do now adjourn.

Carried

The Council-in-Committee meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.