

B.5

MOTION ON NOTICE

5. Implementation Of The City's Gender Equality Strategy (VanRIMS No. 01-5000-12)

MOVER: Councillor Cadman

SECONDER: Councillor

WHEREAS:

1. The people of Vancouver and the rest of Canada and around the world are feeling a heartfelt sympathy for the women and their families and friends who became victims of a vicious serial killer.
2. Throughout the Pickton trial, the eyes of the world are going to be focused on the precarious and dangerous lives women live in the Downtown Eastside, the public services that are provided, the help available, and the support that is offered.
3. The City of Vancouver documented in 2003 the growing crisis in the lives of women and their families, particularly hard hit by the changes and cuts to provincial polices and programs such as welfare, child care, health, employment, sexual assault and violence, legal aid, immigration and advocacy on these women's behalf.
4. The situation has not improved. Women still earn 71% of what men earn for working at full-time jobs, and immigrant women earn even less on average. For aboriginal women, studies document the higher unemployment rates, lower family income, higher school drop out rates and shockingly high rates of physical assault and sexual abuse. Of the 69 women listed as missing by the Missing Women's Task Force, many were aboriginal and many were involved in the sex trade.
5. In fact, since 2003 the crisis has worsened. As the Olympics fuels a spiral of real estate speculation, more and more women cannot afford safe and adequate housing for themselves and their children. A growing number of homeless women at risk of violence on the street and in emergency shelters, and women have few places to turn. Although the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre has allowed women to sleep overnight there, the shelter is inadequate and funds are running out within two months.
6. In spite of years of promises, neither the federal government, the provincial government or the city have provide overnight shelters for women or a 24-hour safe center for sex trade workers.
7. To make matters even worse, Provincial Minister Linda Reid delivered an unexpected and particularly cruel blow to Vancouver's women and children on Jan. 5 with an announcement that she would cut \$35 to \$40 million this year from B.C.'s already under-funded and fragile child care services. Those cuts are scheduled even though the provincial government is predicting a budget surplus of \$2 billion.

8. Recognizing the long-standing patterns of discrimination and the special needs of women and girls, the City of Vancouver adopted a Gender Equality Strategy in July 2005. The city officially recognized that it had a responsibility to ensure that all its citizens are treated with respect and enjoy a quality of life which affords them dignity, independence, and freedom from violence and discrimination; that all its citizens have equal access to its services and resources; and that all its citizens have equal opportunity to fully participate in the political, economic, cultural and social life of the city. The city committed to:
 - promote equality between women and men;
 - identify the specific needs of women and girls,;
 - include women and girls in civic decision-making;
 - promote a safer city for women and girls; and
 - sustain a civic organization that values diversity, supports human rights and provides a respectful workplace free of gender discrimination.
9. The City of Vancouver's Gender Equality Strategy was recognized by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities as a model for other municipalities across the country attempting to play a role in helping to achieve the equality of men and women;
10. Vancouver's Gender Equality Strategy specifies that there be a report back to the community on International Women's Day, March 8th, 2007 giving a full accounting of what has been done to implement the actions prescribed actions in Phase I, including
 - establishment of a Women's Advisory Committee;
 - council reports that address the different implications of city policies and programs for women and for men;
 - a temporary two-year position to facilitate implementation of the strategy;
 - an after hours safe place for aboriginal women and girls in the Downtown Eastside; and
 - more women's participation in neighbourhood planning;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT in accordance with the City's policy, this Council directs staff to prepare a report by March 8 that:

- A) assesses what actions mandated in Phase I of the city's Gender Equality Strategy have been implemented, what challenges and barriers have stood in the way of implementation, and what resources are required to achieve implementation;
- B) specifies what resources and measures are required to begin implementation of actions mandated in Phase II;
- C) formulates a work plan that recognizes the urgency of implementing the actions in Phase I and Phase II.