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DATE 6 January 1998

TO/DEST. The Chair and Members of Council

FROM/EXP. Commissioner
 Social Services Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **UPDATE ON GARDERIE SUNFLOWER CO-OPERATIVE**

BACKGROUND

Garderie Sunflower Co-operative Child Care Centre is a bilingual program, providing 47 toddler and pre-school spaces in the community. The centre had been located, since 1979, in rented space from the City of Ottawa in the St. Pierre Community Centre on Friel Street. In August 1995 the City of Ottawa declared the St. Pierre Community Centre surplus to corporate requirements, but Garderie Sunflower Co-operative had expected to be accommodated by the eventual purchaser. In July 1996 the property was sold and Garderie Sunflower Co-operative was advised that they had until March 31, 1997 to vacate the property.

Suitable sites in which to operate child care programs are difficult to find and secure. Garderie Sunflower Co-operative found what they thought was a suitable site, with the assistance of City of Ottawa staff, in an Ottawa Roman Catholic Separate School Board (ORCSSB) school, located at 88 Main Street in the City of Ottawa. City staff negotiated on Garderie Sunflower Co-operative's behalf a five year lease with an option to renew for a further five year term. A preliminary concept design to meet the requirements of the Day Nurseries Act, was prepared by city staff. Estimates for the fit-up and relocation costs were up to approximately \$125,000.

Garderie Sunflower Co-operative requested capital funding from the Region to move, renovate and equip a new leased space. Previously, Garderie Sunflower Co-operative would have been eligible for an 80% provincial contribution for moving and start-up equipment costs under the Program Development Fund, but this funding stream had been eliminated.

Garderie Sunflower Co-operative's requirement to be in a new location by March 31, 1997, required immediate assistance from a funding partner to safeguard the existence of this bilingual,

toddler and preschool program. Regional Council approved on January 22, 1997 the allocation of a grant up to a ceiling of \$125,000 for moving, renovations and start-up equipment costs incurred by Garderie Sunflower Co-operative.

CURRENT SITUATION

In March of 1997 the ORCSSB officially advised Garderie Sunflower Co-operative that due to the impending legislation on the amalgamation of school boards (Bill 104), Sunflower would only be provided with a month to month lease arrangement. After consultations with staff from the Region and the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) it was decided it would not be prudent to renovate the proposed space at 88 Main Street until the ORCSSB could commit to a five year lease. The location was treated as an interim space, with only minimum renovations to secure a provisional license by MCSS to continue to operate the program. The Province provided funds to allow Garderie Sunflower Co-operative to meet the requirements for a provisional license at 88 Main Street. A suitable permanent site was again sought by Garderie Sunflower Co-operative, which included exploring a suggestion by MCSS to contact the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), who had been trying to establish a workplace child care centre.

After extensive discussions with CMHC and the National Research Council (NRC) an agreement was reached with Garderie Sunflower Co-operative to transfer its program to the CMHC Montreal Road site. Staff at the Region and MCSS have been advised of developments throughout this process and assisted with plans as appropriate.

Renovations for the new centre are planned to provide for 5,600 square feet at a total cost of \$402,000, including the standard 10% contingency for capital projects. The total project costs are consistent with similar projects of this size. As with all capital projects approved by Council, Regional staff have now reviewed and are satisfied with the detailed project plans that have subsequently been developed. The previously approved Regional grant of \$125,000 to move, renovate and provide start-up equipment costs to provide for a permanent location for Garderie Sunflower Co-operative will be used at the Montreal Road site. A significant portion of the Regional grant will be used for start-up equipment costs, such as play structures and program furniture and equipment that will be owned directly by Garderie Sunflower Co-operative, independent of the site. CMHC and NRC will provide the balance of the required funds for the project.

The new site on Montreal Road provides a permanent site for Garderie Sunflower Co-operative, which has remained the primary goal of this project and also places the program in a more advantageous financial situation. Their existing lease at 88 Main Street was still a month to month lease with a 90 day termination clause. Their occupancy would eventually also require further renovations whether or not a permanent lease was secured. With the operation of their program in the Montreal Road site added operating contributions will be provided from CMHC and NRC, which include all rent and utility costs for the first five years of operation. Operating contributions after this time period will depend on the percentage of CMHC and NRC employees utilizing the child care program.

CONCLUSION

Garderie Sunflower Co-operative will utilize the \$125,000 grant approved by Regional Council on January 22, 1997 for moving, renovation and start-up equipment costs, to relocate their program to the CMHC Montreal Road site. The relocation of Garderie Sunflower Co-operative to the CMHC site on Montreal Road safeguards the long term viability of this program and in the process leverages a significant corporate contribution to a child care capital project. As an increased burden is placed on the Region and the local community to finance new capital projects, due to the withdrawal of provincial funding, the ability to duplicate similar partnerships will enhance our ability to maintain programs and service standards.

*Approved by
Dick Stewart
Commissioner*