

the richmond REVIEW

Hockey player laces up for Red Bull
Crashed Ice competition 17



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City champs

Hannah Partridge (left) exemplified the stifling defence that defined the Robert A. McMath Wildcats' 73-27 victory over the Hugh McRoberts Strikers in Wednesday's Richmond high school senior girls' basketball championship final at Richmond Secondary. See Page 28.

Don Fennell photo

Councillors drive down Richmond tax hike

But Mayor Malcolm Brodie calls plan 'very short-sighted'

by Matthew Hoekstra

Staff Reporter

A band of Richmond councillors drove down a looming property tax hike by one-third yesterday, after a split vote decided how to manage the city's bank account.

In a 5-4 vote Tuesday night, the tax increase fell to 1.89 per cent—down one percentage point—meaning the average homeowner will save \$16 from a previously planned increase of \$47.

It was Coun. Bill McNulty who suggested

that one per cent of extra tax—to bolster an account for major projects—be cancelled and the equivalent funds of \$1.8 million be drawn from the city's casino winnings instead.

Richmond, which gets one-tenth of River Rock Casino Resort's gaming revenue, pulled in \$21.1 million from the resort in 2014. That's \$6.2 million greater than forecasted by the city.

Coun. Carol Day sided with McNulty, saying the city is in good financial shape and it's time taxpayers get a break.

"Maybe it's time to slow things down a little bit. I feel it's time to give taxpayers a break," she said. "Let's finish building the seniors centre, let's finish building the pool, let's finish building the City Centre Community Centre,

and let's just slow down the crazy train."

Each year council policy lays the groundwork for a budget that maintains services, adjusts for a consumer price index increase and adds an extra percentage point for city reserves.

Mayor Malcolm Brodie voted against the idea of a one-time reserve top-up instead of a cumulative tax, calling it a "very short-sighted approach."

"The suggestion to take money from the gaming reserves, all you're doing—it's a shell game. What you need to do is increase the amount of reserves that we have. So when it comes time to spend more money on all the various facilities, then we will have that money."

Trim the 2.89% tax hike to 1.89%?

- Yes: Couns. Carol Day, Derek Dang, Ken Johnston, Linda McPhail, Bill McNulty
- No: Couns. Chak Au, Alexa Loo, Harold Steves and Mayor Malcolm Brodie

Brodie, who called the budget "bare bones," said council has approved \$120 million in facilities—\$70 million of which is coming from reserves, \$50 million from a loan.

See Page 4

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Chinese New Year

Richmond the place to ring in Lunar New Year

Shopping malls, temples, restaurants all help celebrate major annual event

by Matthew Hoekstra

Staff Reporter

If there's one community in Metro Vancouver that knows how to celebrate Chinese New Year, it's Richmond. Countdown events, lion dance shows, fairs and food are all on offer to welcome the Year of the Sheep.

The revelry starts on the eve of Chinese New Year, which falls on Feb. 19 this year.

Aberdeen Centre will again host its Countdown Night to Chinese New Year on Feb. 18 beginning at 8:30 p.m. and ending at half-past midnight. The mall, at 4151 Hazelbridge Way, will feature various entertainment acts, including the B.C. Chinese Music Association, Vancouver Academy of Dance, Colours of Dance Academy and Vancouver Cantonese Opera.

The International Buddhist Temple, at 9160 Steveston Hwy., is also hosting a countdown

celebration that begins at 10 a.m. and continues through to midnight.

During the new year period, diners at Richmond's 400 Asian restaurants can expect elaborate feasts. The city's three Hong Kong-style malls will also be in celebration mode with flower and gift fairs, along with many special performances. Richmond Centre and Lansdowne Centre will also host special events, along with the city's Buddhist temples.

Here are a few other events that will celebrate a new year of harmony, peacefulness and lucky fortune.

- Fortune Telling by Master Sherman Tai, Feb. 18 to 22 at River Rock Casino Resort, 8811 River Rd. Tai will offer his renowned fortune telling services by donation to charity.

- Aberdeen Centre's Golden Dragon and Lion Dance on Feb. 19 at 11 a.m., 4151 Hazelbridge Way. With the light of firecrackers, watch the majestic dragon and lions come to life as they dance to welcome the Year of the Sheep.

- World Champion Lion Dance Show at River Rock Feb. 19 to 20, various times. Lion dance show will also feature a world champion acrobatic team from Malaysia and kung fu demonstrations. Tickets are by donation; \$5 minimum.



Richmond Coun. Bill McNulty plays the part of the God of Fortune at last year's Richmond Chamber of Commerce Chinese New Year banquet dinner at Continental Seafood Restaurant. McNulty is flanked by Christine Lim and Stella Chan of Scotiabank.

- Chinese New Year Celebration at Canada Berries winery (formerly Sanduz at 12791 Blundell Rd.),

Feb. 20 to 22 at 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The winery's first Chinese New Year fair will feature entertain-

ment for kids and adults, along with fireworks, face painting and cultural dancing.