

13. MULTICULTURAL CENTRE PURCHASE

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| Corporate Plan Output: Riccarton/Wigram Community Board Vol 1 3.2 Text 6 | |

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on progress with the multicultural centre (Friendship House) purchase.

In March this year the Board received a report from the Advocacy team seeking support for the purchase of Friendship House.

That report referred to the in depth social research undertaken in the Broomfield area in 1997 by Nona Milburn. Among the major recommendations was one pertaining to the lack of a community building in the area. It was recommended that a building be purchased to provide community focus.

As a result of that Advocacy team report, a Working Party was formed to pursue the purchase of a suitable building for use as a centre. In particular the Working Party was to pursue the purchase of Friendship House in Gilberthorpes Road. This complex belonged to the Presbyterian Church who were interested in selling the buildings in order to centralise their outreach at their Church in Amyes Road, Hornby.

The Working Party's task was to work with local people to judge the suitability of the property and to explore ways to fund the purchase.

The buildings offered exciting possibilities for local community organisations as a base to offer programmes in the local community. The Working Party became aware that the Property Unit held unspecified funds for property purchase or upgrade.

The Working Party were also aware that any application for purchase would have to meet the strict criteria of the Council's Facilities Planning team.

After much hard work and a considerable amount of lobbying, a report from the Board went to the Community Services Committee of Council in August requesting support for the purchase of Friendship House.

The request was given favourable consideration provided that some further information was provided.

The report was presented with additional information and went to Council for approval in September. Council agreed with the Community Services Committee recommendation, "that the Property Unit negotiate the purchase of Friendship House for use as a Multicultural Centre". The vote was unanimous.

Negotiations between Council's Property Unit and the Presbyterian Church were concluded on 16 November 2000 for the purchase of the complex.

Council also approved a request by the Advocacy Team for a funding application to the Community Trust for refurbishing the building. We were informed by the Trust on 20 November 2000 that our application was successful, and, we have received \$25,000 for the upgrade of the complex.

Advocacy staff will work with the Property Unit to ensure this proceeds as soon as practicable.

The Community Advocate is currently working with his team to set up a management team to manage the facility. This team replaces the Working Party. It is not envisaged to have the new facility open before March/April.

The Advocacy team are grateful to the Board for their strong support for this venture.

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the information be received.