

**MINUTES OF MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
SPECIAL MEETING
HELD AT THE ROBSON SQUARE MEDIA CENTRE at 7:00 P.M.
ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1996,**

PRESENT:	Chair	Commissioner David Chesman
	Vice Chair	Commissioner Alan Featherstonhaugh
		Commissioner Malcolm Ashford
		Commissioner Allan DeGenova
		Commissioner Tim Louis
		Commissioner Donna Morgan
		Commissioner Duncan Wilson
		General Manager
	Manager, Public Affairs	Terri Clark
	Recording Secretary	Barbara Hammon

The Chair, Commissioner Chesman, thanked everyone for turning out for one of the most impassioned issues of today. He discussed the history between the Aquarium and the Parks Board and the Board's role as landlord. He said the whales were important to the public and that it is important that the Aquarium conduct itself in a manner that is comfortable to the public. The purpose of tonight's meeting was to enable both sides to be heard and allow the Park Board to mediate. At this time there will be no public input.

DELEGATIONS

AQUARIUM to speak to:

- THAT a proposal from the Aquarium is requested prior to September 16, 1996 concerning the following:
 - i. A plan to phase out whales in captivity; and
 - ii. A plan for the resolution of all outstanding issues between the Park Board and Aquarium; transportation, parking, education center and food services.

Dr. John Nightingale, Executive Director Vancouver Aquarium:

Since people heard that the whales were being threatened we have support from all over the world. We are here tonight to find new ways to work with the Park Board in order to better work with the audiences that we both need to serve. Communication with the Park Board needs to be collaborative. We can't work in isolation for effectiveness and economic stability. Our proposal tonight is to take a step forward to stipulate that this Aquarium will take wild whales off the table.

It has become very clear that the Vancouver Aquarium is the expert in whales. We are the ones consulted on care issues. We need to be free to make decisions on what happens with the whales. We need to be free to manage. The issue has nothing to do with wild whales or releasing the ones we have. Even the activists have said releasing the whales is not feasible. We are involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of whales and our research is vital. It is called re-introduction science. We see 4 issues:

1. Access, traffic and parking - We are prepared to use our marketing machine to change public opinion about getting to and around Stanley Park;
2. Renovation - We believe that the Park Board should be involved in those changes. We will propose a master plan for approval. This is customary for most government agencies, for tenants to bring plans forward;
3. Food Services - Our proposal is to develop a joint food services. We think this will generate more revenue;
4. Salmon Stream - Stanley Park is a live environment. It is only the tip of the iceberg of things we can work on together.

The Aquarium was charged by its founders to be an educational institution and be self-sufficient. That is exactly what we are. The Aquarium is self-sufficient due to volunteers and staff that work without pay over-time.

Dr. John Ford, Director of Conservation & Research, Vancouver Aquarium - Discussed importance of research on whales in captivity. Said it is difficult to get research on whales in the wild. People from around the world come to the Vancouver

Aquarium to do research. Cited examples of various studies being done. Believes studies done on whales in captivity can be extrapolated into the wild.

Dr. Dave Bain, Professor at the University of Washington - He is an authority on Killer Whales. Said aquariums are an important component in the conservation of whales and dolphins around the world. The Aquarium must survive if the world is to continue being a safe place for cetaceans. Research is enlightening.

Dr. Ken Norris, Professor Emeritus, University of California, Santa Cruz, Department of Natural History (on video tape) - Believes that information learned from captive whales are intimate things which could not be learned in the wild. From captive whales we have learned about their psychology,

breeding and how to care for them. These animals are a bridge between our species and theirs. To release them would work to their detriment. Real contact between animals and people cannot be satisfactorily accomplished on video.

Ms Kathryn Behrisch, Volunteer Services Manager, Vancouver Aquarium - Believes the best kind of learning takes place face-to-face. This is a transformational learning experience. 18 million people have experienced face-to-face meetings with the whales which permits understanding and concern. Research clearly shows these meetings eclipse television and books because this experience is real. Because of the Vancouver Aquarium many organizations now exist to protect killer whales.

Believes the question asked should be: "How can we ensure through interaction with whales that the quality of their lives is improved, that the quality of our lives is improved and that we can gain perspective on our proper role in nature".

Mr. Doug Beverage, Teacher, Nordale Elementary School of North Vancouver - Uses Vancouver Aquarium for field trips. Seeing the whales teaches children respect for wild animals. Aquarium provides wide range of learning programs. Intends to continue taking children to Aquarium where they will learn from first-hand experience.

Ms. Jill McKnight, High School Student & Young Volunteer at Aquarium - Has had the opportunity to participate in many programs the Aquarium offers. Enjoys sleepovers with the whales. Believes experience is the best teacher.

Ms. Lorene Wilson, Elementary School Student - 8 years old and believes whales should be kept in the Aquarium because they could not survive being released in the wild. Life in the Aquarium is all they know. The Aquarium provided opportunity for children to learn.

Dr. Dave Huff, DVM Consulting Veterinarian Vancouver Aquarium - Believes there will be many problems if Aquarium is not able to secure new animals, such as inbreeding. Wants to have the ability, in case a whale dies, to bring in a companion. There could also be incompatibility problems where whales would need to be exchanged with other aquariums.

Dr. Jim McBain, Veterinarian, SeaWorld, San Diego, CA (on Video) Discussed need to understand whales which could only be accomplished by using whales in captivity.

Sarah McAlpine, Governor, Vancouver Aquarium - In response to the July meeting has studied the principles and goals set by the Vancouver Park Board in 1956 and feels Aquarium has lived up to their obligation. The Aquarium is autonomous and will oppose anything that affects the Aquarium's ability to act in an autonomous way. The Aquarium has never gone to the City for operating expenses and has never been a drain on the tax payer. The Aquarium has been financially healthy for 40 years. Aquarium Board has agreed no whales will be captured by us nor any whale captured after this date. Defies common sense for the Board to tamper with an institution that

has been operating successfully for 40 years.

President of Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums - Discussed her children's experiences with the whales and dolphins and how through direct contact with the marine animals her children respect and understand wild life, their habitats and importance of their survival. She asked without the Aquarium how will others learn about marine animals and marine populations? Much of the research done cannot be done in open oceans. Our children are inheriting a world fraught with environmental problems, this research will help. 1600 marine animals were rescued this past year. That is more animals than have ever been kept for all aquariums. The by-law will obstruct the Aquarium from meeting this need. The Aquarium helps others to care.

Dr. John Nightingale, Executive Director Vancouver Aquarium - Discussed Ernst & Young's Community Impact statements eg, income, jobs, loss of income, etc. Invited Park Board to join in research and conservation. Willing to try moving forward to re-shape relationship with Parks Board.

ACTIVISTS to speak to:

- THAT groups such as Lifeforce, Vancouver Humane Society, No Whales in Captivity and others are requested to submit written proposals to the Park Board prior to September 16, 1996, concerning the phase-out of whales and how that would be accomplished.

Peter Hamilton, Lifeforce - Presented a Whale and Dolphin Phase out Plan:

1. Ban on further imports
2. Rehabilitation and Release
3. Education
4. Research
5. Conservation

Video tape shown as the type of open-ocean research they feel the Aquarium should be involved in. After viewing whales in their natural environment and how they interact asked "if you were a whale would you choose captivity or freedom?"

Ingrid Pollock, Vancouver Humane Society - Was impressed to see so many people present who will hear both sides of issue. Cited media reports from other countries who are trying to deal with zoo closures and whales in captivity. Believes the by-law must be adopted because it is a positive step to helping the Aquarium take new policy steps. Wants referendum to be part of the upcoming election. Phase out of whales must have a goal and have an independent committee comprised of all interested groups. Believes phasing out of whales will be met by threats. Said that there are many successful aquariums that exist without whales.

Jim Harvey, Friends of Stanley Park - stated that Stanley Park doesn't need whales. Solution: separate whales from Stanley Park forever. There isn't room for both. In favour of whale research, in their natural habitat. Taking in

injured marine animals is no excuse for a life time of confinement. The Aquarium' s solution to the problem is expansion! Urge Park Board to adopt by-law and impose harsh penalties including expulsion. Public should be given oportunity to vote in referendum as they did with the zoo.

Linda Shehan, No Whales In Captivity - Reviewed ethics of keeping whales.

Peter Watson, Discussed business aspects of removing whales. Said it is easy to postulate sky will collapse when the information is limited and coming only from the Aquarium. Reviewed alternatives: cost to phase out; dates should be staggered; what would happen if expenses changed; new uses for Aquarium space; new ways to generate revenue.

Annelise Sorg, Director of No Whales in Captivity - Provided artistic renditions for turning whale pools into a scuba diving centre.

Dr. Philip Watts, Biologist - Reviewed 5 options for phasing out the whales (see report):

1. Inertia
2. Euthanasia
3. Relocation
4. Rehabilitation
5. Retirement

Kathy Kinsmen, Return to the Wild - Believes marine animals need a half-way home. Wants to bring Beluga Whales to Bras d' Or Lakes on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia and retire them there. It is an inland sea and one other whale trapped himself there and lived successfully for a number of years.

Meeting Adjourned 11:25 p.m.

NEXT MEETING
SEPTEMBER 26TH, 1996, 7:00 P.M.,
MEDIA ROBSON CENTRE
