

MINUTES OF
 PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
 HELD IN THE PARK BOARD OFFICE
 ON MONDAY, APRIL 14, 1997

PRESENT:	Acting Chair	Alan Fetherstonhaugh
	Commissioners	Allan DeGenova
		Laura McDiarmid
		Patrick Warren
		Duncan Wilson
		Gabriel Yong
	General Manager	Vic Kondrosky
	Director, Planning & Development	Jim Lowden
	Director, Administrative & Revenue Services	Philip Josephs
	Director, Environment & Operations	Liane McKenna
	Director of Finance	Doug Holden
	Manager, Park Acquisition & Research	Pieter Rutgers
	Manager, Facility Development	Rudy Roelofsen
	Manager, Public Affairs	Terri Clark (part-time)
	Planner	Tilo Driessen
Recording Secretary	Barbara Stampfl	

Appointment of Acting Chair:

Moved by Commissioner DeGenova,

THAT Commissioner Fetherstonhaugh be appointed as Acting Chair for this Planning & Environment Committee meeting.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DELEGATIONS

Item 1 - **Stanley Park Jitney Service - Contract Award, Amended Report**

Committee members received copies of a staff report dated April 4, 1997 with recommendations to award the contract for the jitney service to The Vancouver Trolley Company and approve the purchase of additional services if required. Also

recommended was that parking fees in Stanley Park be increased starting in 1997; that a new parking lot be built in the location of the service yard, that approximately 600 roadside parking spaces along Park Drive and North Lagoon Drive be eliminated in 1998; and, that a dedicated lane for the jitney and buses be implemented on North Lagoon Drive starting in 1998.

The Manager of Park Acquisition and Research outlined the changes included in the amended report and also advised that there was an error in the table on page 4 which has the figures for the parking lots on the east side and west side of Stanley Park transposed.

Emma Del Santos - not available.

Brian O'Sullivan, Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, stated that the Club has been at their location in Stanley Park since 1905 and have enjoyed excellent relations with the Park Board. They are sympathetic with environmental concerns and have implemented policies even though there is no law requiring this. They are against the elimination of parking as they do not see this as a meaningful method of reducing pollution. There is no support for this proposal from either the Stanley Park stakeholders or the executive and members of the Yacht Club. They feel this proposal is an anti-family move. If there is a jitney service it should use two existing lanes of traffic, take away only a few parking spots and there should be reduced rates in the Service Yard parking lot for people using the jitney.

Brent Davies, Ferguson Point Teahouse, appeared before the Committee regarding the increase in parking fees. A survey conducted at the restaurant reveals that the majority are not in favour of this increase. When the lease negotiations were being done, parking was put on the table but the operator was told that this could not be included in the rent formula. 90% of their customers arrive by automobile and their volume of customers has already gone down since pay parking came into effect. Mr. Davies is concerned that if his customers have to arrive at the restaurant by jitney the volume will drop even more.

Vince Miele, a representative from B.C. Paraplegic Association, expressed concerns about fees for parking and access to the jitney services. The Association feels that all jitanies should be wheelchair accessible right from day one of operation and urged the Board to adopt this policy. It was noted, however, that many disabled individuals prefer to use their own vehicles as they have specially equipped vans, etc. The Board was asked to look at making the fees affordable as many people are on fixed incomes. He questioned what happens after September 15 and would the service still be available. Mr. Minelli added that not only people in wheelchairs but those with other problems such as respiratory problems need to be considered and parking spots should be placed to accommodate all those people displaying a placard.

Commissioner Wilson stated that the Board have been told that they should not be granting special privileges to the disabled and the Board's practice is that those vehicles displaying a disabled sticker will not be ticketed and that there is the option to pay or not. With regard to the allotment of parking Commissioner Wilson suggested that the B.C. Paraplegic Association work with staff on this.

Pieter Rutgers advised that no change will take place off season with regard to the

parking stalls.

Marie Dickson, a concerned citizen, echoed the concerns expressed by Brian O'Sullivan regarding families coming to the park. She felt that the jitney service will not accommodate families.

Dr. J. Nightingale, Vancouver Aquarium, stated that Stanley Park has limited access to all of its facilities but there is no mass transit available and, as there is no real data on park users patterns, he questioned why these changes were being recommended. He feels that pollution will not be reduced as people will do more driving around the park looking for parking spaces. He feels that the present system is self regulating and suggested that parking lots should be built outside of the park. The public needs to know the overall cost, removal of parking spaces and the report needs to say that the service yard parking will go ahead. He suggested that a committee be set up to work with staff on the concerns of the stakeholders as there is a need for serious planning of other forms of transportation to the park as well as more centralized parking. He provided a survey conducted at the Aquarium which shows that most people are not aware of the jitney proposal and would not support it as it is not in the visitors' use plan.

Scott Mason, Land Sea Tours, stated that he is in favour of the jitney as it is the first step in reducing vehicle reliance. There will be no problem for people if they know there is a free jitney available. As he did not see anyone else coming forward on this issue from the tour industry this should indicate that they are not against this proposal.

Park Planner, Tilo Driessen, informed the Committee that there will be a 25% increase in bus service into Stanley Park with buses every 7 1/2 minutes. As well, the North Vancouver buses will provide more stops along Georgia St. and other downtown bus service may help in other ways as well.

Eleanor Hadley stated that everyone is getting something for nothing except the taxpayers of Vancouver who pay to maintain Stanley Park. She feels that Stanley Park is now a transit service and not a park and everywhere there is transit it takes away from the park. She referred to the 1985 Master Plan and stated that almost everything in it was turned down by previous Boards but the planning department keeps bringing this issue up. She feels that having a parking lot by the service yard will bring more pollution and noise into this area.

Commissioner Warren informed Ms. Hadley that the buses will be using natural gas and the goal of the Board is to reduce cars in the park which will improve the air quality. He pointed out that the implementation is delayed for a year to ensure that jitneys using natural gas rather than diesel will be available.

Tom Nichols, Save Our Parkland Association, informed the Board that they approve and support all of the recommendations in the staff report except for the construction of a new parking lot in the service yard area. He outlined the reasons for supporting the jitney which included permitting more persons to visit the park and improving the park experience. This is a natural extension of service offered by B.C. Transit and it is environmentally friendly. The Association would prefer that the service yard parking lot be avoided and are concerned that it may be built and then nothing else happens of a permanent nature. It is also assumed that the

jitney will go to the parking lot.

Gerry O'Neil, AAA Horse & Carriage, was concerned that people may not know what the word jitney means and suggested that shuttle be used instead. He felt uncomfortable with the jitney being subsidized by the taxpayers and felt that tour operators should provide the service instead. It should be user pay especially since not everyone using it are Vancouver residents. He was also greatly concerned about the amount of space that will be used for the parking lot at the Service Yard and how this will impact on his operation.

The Director of Planning informed the Committee that for the first year they will try operating with both the jitney and the Horse & Carriage operation and see how it works. They will give it a fair trial but would be a mistake to commit to long term plans. He added that the Service Yard area will not be able to accommodate Mr. O' Neil' s proposed expansion.

After further discussion regarding the Service Yard usage, Commissioner Wilson stated that he wanted to ensure that Mr. O' Neil' s concerns regarding the stables will be discussed.

Moved by Commissioner Wilson,

THAT in recommendation E add that staff be directed to negotiate a mutually acceptable arrangement with AAA Horse & Carriage concerning their stables.

THAT recommendation F be amended by replacing the word "approximately" with the word "maximum" and add the following: "to the greatest extent possible this be done during implementation of the jitney".

During discussion of these amendments, Commissioner Warren noted that Mr. O' Neil has overstepped the envelope which already exists in the park and he did not feel that the Board should target one specific user.

Commissioner McDiarmid approved of the jitney service to alleviate traffic problems in the park but was concerned that the stakeholders concerns need further discussion.

Committee members agreed that this item be referred to the Board meeting later this same date.

Item 2 - **Brockton Totem Poles Concession/Visitor Centre**

Committee members received copies of a staff report dated April 3, 1997 recommending that the Board approve the concept of a Concession/visitor Centre at the Brockton Totem Pole site in Stanley Park; that an architect be retained to prepare a concept design for the Board' s approval; and that the Board request City Council to provide funding on a loan basis for the proposed Visitor Centre.

Philip Josephs, Director of Administrative & Revenue Services, made a presentation on the three components of the proposed concession/visitor centre.

Renee Jensen stated that she could not believe this issue was coming up again as it had been defeated by previous Boards. She did agree that washrooms at this location may be necessary but a concession would mean further commercialization of the park. She outlined the history of the totem poles and pleaded with the Board to leave this area as it is.

Commissioner Wilson noted that there is some inequity with the totem poles as they are not carved by local natives and interpretation is necessary to address this issue. Ms. Jensen felt that the information could be made available in an interpretive centre elsewhere and she wondered why the Board were catering so much to tourists resulting in Stanley Park ceasing to be the park it once was.

Commissioner Yong stated that this would not be an increase in commercialism and the Board does need the revenue to pay for the washroom facilities. Commissioner DeGenova was concerned that the building may result in lost views but was informed by the Manager of Facility Development that this would not be the case. Commissioner McDiarmid stated that the point is to put something at this location that will enhance the spirituality with an interpretive centre.

Sonya Prasad, an anthropology major, stated that this is a unique area and the totem poles represent an historical piece of this city. She was concerned that the First Nations need to be included in any planning for this area as anything symbolic of their culture is important to them. She suggested that a plaque be installed to explain the totem poles and that it is imperative that the poles be visible. Ms. Prasad submitted a petition signed by people who are against building a commercial facility at the Brockton totem pole site.

Commissioner Wilson explained that the Board' s concern is the interpretive point of view because they feel they are misinforming people as the totem poles do not represent the people who were here first in Stanley Park as these poles were carved by the Haida.

Marie Dickson noted that this issue was tabled by previous Boards and she was surprised that is once again before the Board. She noted that it is presently 400 metres to the nearest washroom but people have to walk 700 metres to the nearest parking ticket dispenser. She felt it was alright to have plaques for interpretation of the totem poles but there is no need to have a concession stand or washrooms as these will take away from the natural beauty at this site. She urged the Board to not change this area.

Guido Modenese likes the idea of washrooms at this location but we do not need more commercialism in the park as this would take away from the totem poles. He felt that the food offered overall in the park concessions should be improved. He also felt that the Board should hear from the First Nations people as well.

Joanne Welch, did not agree with having a building erected at the totem pole site. She felt that plaques explaining the totem poles would be acceptable but did not want to see a concession stand there as it would attract even more people to this area.

George Frankel, operator of the Prospect Point Cafe, appeared before the Committee with his Financial Advisor, **Alan Hawkins**, lawyer **Gerome Ziskrout**,

and **Laird Cruickshank**. These gentlemen outlined all the concerns they had with regard to the significant financial impact a concession stand at the totem poles would have on Mr. Frankel' s operation at Prospect Point. A large capital expenditure by Mr. Frankel was undertaken recently to upgrade the facilities at Prospect Point and when his business plan was submitted to the Park Board there was no mention of this plan for the totem pole area. It was felt that a concession at the totem poles would be more strategically located and that tourists would make their purchases there rather than later when the tour buses stop at Prospect Point. It was felt that this is a case of the landlord going into competition with a tenant.

Scott Mason, Land Sea Tours, felt that the washrooms at Brockton totem poles are necessary and that an interpretive centre would be an asset but a concession stand is not required. He could see that this would be in competition with the Prospect Point Cafe. He suggested that Mr. Frankel could operate the concession stand if one were to be put into the totem pole site.

Kim Gaudette is a frequent visitor to the park and was concerned that he proposed facility would be one more commercial venture disguised behind a comfort station and an interpretive centre. He urged the Board to not sacrifice the natural beauty of this area as a visitor centre will detract from the peace and tranquillity of this precious site. He suggested that the current washrooms should be upgraded and that bronze plaques could be affixed at the bottom of the totem poles.

Eleanor Hadley stated that she was happy to see young people carrying the torch to look after Stanley Park. She has been doing her best for decades and is upset about what is happened in the park. She does not feel that washrooms have to be provided and she did not want to see a concession stand at the totem pole area as it will destroy the ambiance of this area as well as injure the business of the well established restaurant at Prospect Point.

Tom Nichols, Save Our Parkland Association, stated that they are opposed to the concession/visitor centre proposed for the totem pole area because it would increase congestion in an already heavily trafficked area; it would further commercialize the park and it would further erode what little remains of the peace and tranquillity of the Brockton area. They do not feel that the concession can be justified by saying its footprint will be only a little larger than the existing unused carving shed. The Board was urged to reject the concession proposal and it was hoped that this battle would not have to be fought again every five years. Mr. Nichols also thought that the local First Nations should be consulted for their views on this proposal.

Commissioner Fetherstonhaugh noted that the staff report had gone to the local First Nations bands for their information but no response has been received from them.

Moved by Commissioner Wilson,

THAT the report on the Brockton Totem Poles Concession/Visitor Centre be referred to the next meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meeting adjourned 6:50 p.m.
