

Date: March 12, 1999

SUBJECT: VANCOUVER GENERAL HOSPITAL OPEN SPACE /UNIVERSAL GARDENS

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Board endorse the efforts of the Universal Gardens Society to establish a Universal Garden/Park at the Open Space to be created by the Vancouver General Hospital as part of it's redevelopment plan.**
- B. THAT the Board reaffirms its support for the commitment to the existing Open Space agreement under which the Vancouver General Hospital is to create 5.1 acres of Open Space to include the relocated existing tennis courts.**

POLICY

There is no applicable policy, but the Board in 1989 approved a legal agreement to create a 5.1 acre open space at Vancouver General Hospital.

BACKGROUND

In 1984 the Vancouver General Hospital and the Park Board struck an agreement for the Hospital to make available land at the corner at Oak and 12th Avenue for the Park Board to pay for the construction and maintenance of 4 tennis courts. It was originally anticipated that the tennis courts would be on site for possibly 8 years, at which time Hospital would require the site for a building referred to as Laurel Street Pavilion (LSP2B).

In mid 1980's the Hospital embarked on a ambitious development plan, which is illustrated on diagram # 1. Under this plan, the large high rise tower known as LSP2A was constructed and the basic notion was that as this building would be filled up with uses currently housed in the Heather Pavilion Complex. The Heather Pavilion building along with numerous additions would then be demolished to create a 5.1 acre Open Space bounded by Willow, 12th Avenue, 10th Avenue and a service road between the Open Space (see diagram #2 for illustrative design) and the Centennial Pavilion. To date only 3 floors of LSP2A have been filled and currently there is no budget to equip the remaining floors.

In 1992, the Hospital proposed to remove the power plant, potentially enlarging the open space from 5.1 to 5.5 acres. City Council agreed to the open space concept principally for three reasons, firstly to recognize that over a number of years the Hospital site coverage had edged up over and beyond levels considered desirable by Council. Secondly the high levels of use of the tennis courts indicated that a significant recreational demand was being met. Thirdly the open space could service the

neighbouring community south of the Vancouver General Hospital bounded by 12th Avenue, Oak, Cambie and 16th Avenue. This area was re-zoned to a higher apartment density in 1984, without additional park space being available.

In 1992 the Board and Council received a study by Richard Henriquez, who was commissioned to examine the feasibility of retaining portions of the Heather Pavilion, which is currently largely hidden from view but is a significant heritage asset. A re-designed Open Space was illustrated in the report (see diagram #3). The Board took further action, but Council agreed to be open for the retention of the original portion of the Heather Pavilion, if a use for the building is found.

DISCUSSION

In 1998 the Vancouver General Hospital once again began reconsidering its development plans for site and engaged in preliminary discussions with City and Park Board staff. These discussions indicated that the Hospital would like, in addition to traditional hospital uses, to establish a biotechnology industrial complex, and to provide congregate housing. It was indicated that the combination of these proposals would eliminate the consolidated 5.5 acre Open Space. Instead the Hospital indicated they were contemplating a series of smaller spaces dotted across the Hospital lands. In discussions with the City Planning department the stage is being set for the Hospital and/or the Planning Department undertaking an urban design study for the Hospital precinct, which would address various urban design and land use issues that have been raised.

Independent of this process a group of citizens interested in exploring the therapeutic value of parks and gardens has been formed. The Universal Garden Society's goals are:

- to encourage a creation of an innovative garden - Park at Vancouver General Hospital
- to forge an alliance between the Community, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and Vancouver General Hospital
- to explore the educational and therapeutic role of gardening.

The Universal Garden Society is a non-profit society and is interested in becoming a partner with both Board and the Hospital in achieving its objectives.

The Universal Garden is to look after the needs of hospital patients and staff, neighbours, school children and people who work near by.

The Universal Garden is to be created as a result of a community based design process involving local residents, Vancouver General Hospital staff, and patients. The Society made a presentation to the Board's workshop of February 15, 1999.

SUMMARY

Since the City Planning Department and Vancouver General Hospital are about to commence a

precinct study it is appropriate for the Board to outline its interests. At this time these are twofold. Firstly the Board continues to be interested in seeing 5.1 acres of Open Space to be provided, largely in a contiguous way. Secondly the Board is supportive of the Universal Garden concept to be included within the Open Space, along with the 4 tennis courts currently located at Oak and 12th Avenue.

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