



Date: July 30, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Pacific Indoor Bowls Club at Grimmatt Park

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Pacific Indoor Bowls Club's month-to-month lease of the building at 169 E. 19th Avenue in Grimmatt Park be extended from June 1, 2001 to September 1, 2001.**
- B. THAT demolition of the building at 169 E. 19th Avenue and development of the remaining portion of Grimmatt Park be initiated in September 2001.**
- C. THAT staff be instructed to work with the Pacific Indoor Bowls Club to identify options for temporarily relocating the Club to another facility, and report back with proposed lease terms for site(s) that are suitable.**
- D. THAT the Memorandum of Understanding between the Park Board, the Millennium Sports Facility Society, the Pacific Indoor Bowls Club and the Phoenix Gymnastics Club be modified so that clause 14 reads: "the MSFS shall have until June 1, 2002 to arrange for all necessary funding, permits and the start of construction".**
- E. THAT the \$250,000 Park Board capital contribution toward the Pacific Indoor Bowls Club redevelopment be reconsidered in June 2002.**

POLICY

The Park Board approved the Management Plan in May 1992, which includes the following:

- the Board's objective is to ensure that each neighbourhood in the city has sufficient accessible open space to maintain and enhance the liveability of the area for its residents;
- the Board will enter into agreements with other organizations to operate facilities where it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are beneficial to the public good.

BACKGROUND (see Appendix A for a detailed history)

Grimmett Park is a 0.24 hectare (0.6 acre) park located on the north side of E. 19th Avenue between Quebec and Main Streets. The Board permitted an indoor lawn bowling facility to be built at Grimmett Park, which was completed in 1938 and is operated by the Pacific Indoor Bowls Club (PIBC).



In the mid to late 1980s, the Club recognized that their aging facility needed replacement, and began searching for a new site. In 1986, the Board decided to assist with the relocation and included a contribution of \$250,000 in the 1987-1990 Capital Plan. Between 1988 and 1998, the Club and staff explored the following options for their new facility: the un-named park along 49th Avenue west of Columbia Street, the Sunset Nursery site, the “Hillcrest Centre” in Nat Bailey Stadium Park, and the Forum Building at Hastings Park. For a variety of reasons, none of these options proved successful.

In addition to relocating the facility, the Club explored the possibility of building a new facility in Grimmett Park in the early 1990s. In April 1993, the Board decided “that the motion to refer the proposal to rebuild the Pacific Indoor Lawn Bowling facility on its existing site to a public meeting be postponed indefinitely”.

Residents around Grimmert Park have been advocating for the “greening of Grimmert Park” for more than a decade. Prior to 1999, the whole park site was covered by either the lawn bowling building or by surface parking. The greening of this park site is important since there are no other parks or school yards in the area bounded by 16th Avenue, Main Street, King Edward Avenue and Cambie Street.

In 1998, staff recommended to “green” the parking lot west of the building, while the PIBC would continue to use the building. Accordingly, the Board approved in March 1998: “that park development on the westerly 96 feet of Lot E at Grimmert Park be pursued immediately”. The parking lot west of the building was converted to green space in 1999.



In March 1998, the Board also approved:

“that park development for the completion of Grimmert Park commence no later than June 1, 2001;

that the Pacific Indoor Lawn Bowling Club be advised that the month-to-month lease will not be extended beyond June 1, 2001, and the Club is to vacate the building at Grimmert Park no later than that date;

that the \$250,000 Park Board capital contribution toward the Lawn Bowling Club redevelopment be reconsidered in June 2001.”

In early 1999, the PIBC and the Phoenix Gymnastics Club agreed to work together to build a new facility (now called the Millennium Sports Facility) in Nat Bailey Stadium Park that would house both indoor lawn bowling and gymnastics. In June 1999, the Board approved in principle the joint proposal.

In February 2000, the Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Millennium Sports Facility Society (MSFS), the PIBC and the Phoenix Gymnastics Club. The MoU includes the following clause: “the MSFS shall have until June 1, 2001 to arrange for all necessary funding, permits and the start of construction.”

In September 2000, the Board approved the Riley-Hillcrest Master Plan and endorsed “the proposed location of the Millennium Sports Facility (...) at the intersection of Midlothian Drive and Clancy Loranger Way.”

DISCUSSION

We are now at the target date set by the Board for four critical actions:

- a) starting on the greening of the remaining portion of Grimmnett Park;
- b) terminating the month-to-month lease of the building at 169 E. 19th Avenue in Grimmnett Park with the PIBC;
- c) reviewing the \$250,000 Capital Plan commitment made by Park Board toward the construction of a new indoor lawn bowling facility;
- d) commencing construction on the Millennium Sports Facility in Nat Bailey Stadium Park.

The termination of the PIBC lease and the greening of Grimmnett Park

The Park Board is faced with a dilemma between two important objectives: providing badly-needed green space in a park-deficient neighbourhood, and assisting a long-time non-profit partner provide recreational services to its members.



On the one hand, the 5,500 residents (including 1,000 children and teenagers) in the area bounded by 16th Avenue, Main Street, King Edward Avenue and Cambie Street, have no park or school yard at their disposal, except the 0.1 hectares (0.25 acres) provided in the westerly portion of Grimmett Park. There are other parks nearby (Mount Pleasant Park, Prince Edward Park, Douglas Park) but these are all located across arterial streets.

Greening the easterly portion of Grimmett Park (where the lawn bowling building now stands) would add 0.15 hectares (0.35 acres) of badly-needed green space to the community. Nearby residents have been strong advocates for this park and would like to see the demolition of the building and the greening occur as soon as possible.

On the other hand, the PIBC provides a valuable recreational service to lawn bowlers who wish to play during our rainy winter months. Their membership fluctuates between 200 and 250 members, many of whom are seniors. PIBC believes the Millennium Sports Facility can be completed in the summer of 2002, and the Club is hoping to have their lease at Grimmett Park extended for one more year. PIBC has stated that they would vacate the building at Grimmett Park in the spring of 2002 even if construction on the Millennium Sports Facility cannot be completed in time for the 2002-2003 season.

Staff have estimated the minimum length of time required for the Millennium Sports Facility to be built and for the PIBC to vacate their existing building, if these were to occur as a sequence:

- MSFS to prepare plans and obtain Development Permit & Building Permit from City: June 2001 to Jan. 2002;
- MSFS contractor to build facility (9 to 12 months): Feb. 2002 to Oct. 2002 or Jan. 2003;
- PIBC to vacate their building at Grimmett Park: Dec. 2002 (end of fall season) or April 2003 (end of winter season).

Staff therefore believe it is impossible to offer the PIBC a seamless transition from their existing building to the Millennium Sports Facility without extending their lease for at least one and a half years.

Staff estimate the following length of time for the greening of Grimmett Park:

- Park Board to demolish building: 2 months;
- Park Board contractor to landscape site and install leisure/recreational equipment: 2 months.

Under the scenario suggested by the PIBC (a one year lease extension), the greening could occur later in 2002. If the PIBC were permitted to stay in their existing building until the new Millennium Sports Facility is completed, the earliest conceivable date for the greening is in the spring of 2003.

Extending the lease by one more year or waiting until a new lawn bowling facility is built before proceeding with the greening of Grimmett Park would mean that residents in this community are prevented, in the short to medium term, from having access to a reasonable amount of park space. Residents will perceive this as a long delay since they have been advocating for the greening of Grimmett Park for more than a decade.

Given that one of the Park Board's fundamental objectives is to provide open space opportunities to residents, especially in park-deficient communities, staff recommend that the Board proceed with the greening of Grimmett Park this year. Staff will report back on the final park design and construction costs later this year. The greening of Grimmett Park would be completed in the first half of 2002.

Staff note that a minor modification is needed so that the PIBC's lease be terminated on September 1, 2001 (not June 1, 2001, as had been previously approved by the Board). This is due to additional time needed by the PIBC to vacate the premises. Staff note that residents near Grimmett Park are opposed to this extension, since PIBC has known for more than 3 years that they needed to vacate on June 1, 2001.

It is recognized that terminating the PIBC's lease at Grimmett Park prior to the completion of the Millennium Sports Facility may affect the Club negatively, since it may have to suspend its operation for several years before resuming its activities at the new facility. The result may be a drop in membership, reduced fund raising capabilities, and, at least in the initial years, lower participation at the new facility.

For this reason, staff are recommending that options to relocate the PIBC to a temporary facility be pursued, one that would fill the gap between vacating their premises this year and being accommodated in the Millennium Sports Facility in late 2002 or beyond. If staff and the Club are successful in finding suitable premises, staff will report back to the Board with proposed lease terms at the earliest possible date.

Millennium Sports Facility timeline and the Board's capital commitment

Construction on the Millennium Sports Facility has not started by June 1, 2001, which was the target date written in the Memorandum of Understanding. The two clubs have raised \$1.8 million to date, but this is still short of the \$3.4 million needed¹. And although the Millennium Sports Facility Society (MSFS) has recently selected an architect, none of the permits required by City Hall have been obtained. As a result, the earliest conceivable date for construction to commence is in early 2002.

A key factor in meeting this timeline is whether the MSFS will receive a grant from the Federal-

¹ This is a project estimate from the Millennium Sports Facility Society.

Provincial Infrastructure Program. The MSFS applied for a \$1.7 million grant in March 2001. Program officials had stated that announcements would be made in the spring, however, due to the provincial election on May 16, the announcements are being delayed until later in the summer. If a grant is not received, then the timeline for construction of the Millennium Sports Facility is likely to be stretched over an even longer period of time.

Staff recommend that additional but not unlimited time be given to the MSFS. As a result, it is recommended that June 1, 2002 be the given as the date for construction to start on the Millennium Sports Facility, and that the Memorandum of Understanding be modified to match this revised target date.

In keeping with this deadline, staff also recommend that the Board reconsider its \$250,000 Capital Plan contribution to the PIBC not in June 2001 but in June 2002.

SUMMARY

Staff are recommending that the Park Board proceed with the completion of the greening of Grimmatt Park, starting in September 2001. Providing additional park in this park-deficient community is seen as much overdue.

Terminating the lease at Grimmatt Park will affect the Pacific Lawn Bowls Club's ability to operate until the Millennium Sports Facility is completed. Staff are therefore recommending to assist the Club in searching for a temporary facility.

The termination of the Club's lease is unlikely to have a negative impact on the construction of the Millennium Sports Facility, should the infrastructure grant be approved this summer. Staff are recommending a revision to the original timetable in the Memorandum of Understanding, one that will provide more time to begin construction on the Millennium Sports Facility.

Terminating the Club's lease is the reasonable course of action even if the infrastructure grant may not be approved. This is because, under this scenario, the time frame for relocating the Club would be delayed, and therefore the Board would not be able to provide a reliable schedule to deliver the planned park to the residents of the area.

Prepared by:

Planning and Operations Division
Board of Parks & Recreation
Vancouver, BC
(md)

