

**Minutes of Meeting  
Finance Committee, Vancouver Park Board  
2099 Beach Avenue, Vancouver**

**DATE OF MEETING:** May 31, 2004

**ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners**  
Commissioner Anita Romaniuk  
Commissioner Heather Deal  
Commissioner Lyndsay Poaps  
Commissioner Suzanne Anton

**Park Board Staff**

Anita Ho	Director of Corporate Services
Liane McKenna	Director of Queen Elizabeth District
Lori MacKay	Director of Vancouver East District
Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Cindy Mercer	Manager of Purchasing
Philip Josephs	Manager of Revenue Services
Ron Caswell	Manager of Operations
Alison Dempsey	Business Services
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

**Delegations**

Dr. Leonora Angeles	Centre for Human Settlements, UBC
Susan Kurbis	Environmental Youth Alliance
Muggs Sigurgjerson	Strathcona Community Garden

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. Review of meeting minutes from March 15, 2004
2. Ethical Purchasing
3. Participatory Budget Group - Presentation
4. Proposals in Fee Changes - Tour bus parking / Ghost Train and Bright Nights
5. Recreation Software Renewal
6. Licence/Lease Renewals - Community Gardens / Connaught Park Fieldhouse
7. Review of Operating and Capital Statements

**1. Review of the Minutes of the March 15, 2004 Meeting:**

The minutes of the Finance Committee of March 15, 2004 were adopted as presented (moved by C. Deal, seconded by C. Poaps, all in favour).

**2. Ethical Purchasing:**

Cindy Mercer reviewed a document submitted to the Finance Committee which outlined the roles and responsibilities of the Purchasing Unit, and described current Park Board purchasing policies and procedures. The Park Board does not presently have any formal policies on environmental or ethical purchasing. Cindy reported the results of a survey that staff conducted in February 2004 to gather information from current contractors, and noted the need to reassure and work

closely with suppliers as changes in purchasing policies are implemented.

On April 6, 2004 City Council passed a motion declaring its intention to implement a Sustainable and Ethical Procurement Policy for the City of Vancouver before the end of 2004, and directed staff to report to Council in June on six questions related to purchases of apparel, textiles, coffee and food. Cindy reported on how staff is proceeding with the development of a Park Board policy, described Park Board responses to the six questions contained in the City motion, and highlighted relevant factors and costs associated the implementation of this kind of policy. Issues include the importance (and difficulty) of ensuring policy compliance with more than 200 vendors and their subcontractors, as well as the cost implications of purchasing more expensive commodities, compliance management and verification, and dispute resolution.

Staff are recommending, where practical and economical, that future purchasing choices incorporate environmentally responsible and ethical purchasing criteria.

Discussion:

- Committee members asked questions about the process of selecting which criteria for different products can best meet the intent of the policy. Staff explained that specifications will be carefully expanded and redefined before tenders are opened in order to facilitate successful compliance.
- Committee members acknowledged the importance of placing the onus on suppliers to be aware of subcontractor policies and procedures, provide accurate information and prove policy compliance.
- The Committee would like to include “fair trade” as a specification in coffee contract tenders.
- The timeline for developing a Park Board ethical / environment purchasing policy was discussed. Committee members asked staff to communicate closely with City staff over the next month as the individual draft policies are being developed.

Action:

- Staff will present a draft Ethical and Environmental Purchasing Policy to the Finance Committee at the next meeting.
- Staff will provide examples of paper tenders to Committee members.

**3. Participatory Budget Group - Presentation:**

Dr. Leonora Angeles, Associate Professor with UBC’s Faculty of Graduate Studies, described the 2004 Community-University Research Alliance (CURA), a five year research project proposed by UBC’s School of Community and Regional Planning. Combining research with local capacity building, and promoting “Participatory Budgeting” in Canadian municipalities, the purpose of the community-led project is to determine the possibilities and conditions under which participatory budgeting can work in Canada to help revitalize local democracy and address social, economic and environmental problems that communities are facing. Over the 5 year course of the CURA (2005 - 2010), 10 local workshops will be held in the Greater Vancouver area to explore the potential for Participatory Budgeting under various Canadian municipal conditions.

Current CURA government partners include the City of Vancouver, City of North Vancouver, the Municipality of Bowen Island, and the Vancouver School Board. The Vancouver Park Board

has been identified as a potential partner in the project. Dr. Angeles suggested that the Park Board design a research statement and an appropriate model for a neighbourhood pilot project. Specifically, she requested that by July 15, 2004 the Vancouver Park Board provide the CURA with the following:

- a one page letter of support including an official statement of project and how it links to the Park Board's mandate
- specific research interests
- cash/in-kind contribution (ie. staff release-time stipend at a determined rate; use of facilities)

Upcoming CURA meetings that Park Board Commissioners and staff are invited to attend include:

1. June 2, 9am - 12pm: with Chris Cavanaugh
2. June 3, 4 - 6pm: discuss the first draft of the CURA, learn more about other municipal experiences, and share individual organizational involvement, commitment, and research interests
3. July 15: create a participatory budgeting process

#### Discussion:

- The level of staff time that might be involved in terms of research depends on the Park Board's research question. Additional staff time would be required to supervise students and provide data.
- The City of Vancouver has been a full partner from the letter of intent stage, and will confirm its financial commitment by the end of July. Dr. Angeles will provide the Finance Committee with a copy of the City's motion of approval.
- Anita Ho will confer with her City of Vancouver colleagues, and will try to attend the June 3 meeting. The Park Board is part of the City's Strategic Budget Review group that is reviewing Participatory Budgeting as one type of budget model.

#### **4. Proposals for Fee Changes:**

Philip Josephs and Alison Dempsey presented proposals for fee changes in tour bus parking rates in Stanley Park, and to the Ghost Train and Bright Nights special events ticket price structure at the Miniature Railway in Stanley Park.

##### A. Tour Bus Stopping and Parking:

Staff recommended to the Finance Committee that:

- existing tour bus parking and pass rates be increased in 2005 by approximately 17% (projected increase of \$29,000)
- a new rate equivalent to the above rate be introduced for bus companies who offer dedicated tours in Stanley Park but do not currently pay for parking (projected net revenue \$10,000)

Staff explained that raising parking rates will help offset the higher costs of maintaining roads in the park due to increased heavy vehicle traffic, and noted that rates are not raised every year.

##### Action:

The Finance Committee recommends that the Board approve the proposed new fees for bus parking in Stanley Park.

## B. Ghost Train / Bright Nights:

Staff described the Ghost Train and Bright Nights as special events that are very different from regular train and farmyard attractions, drawing large, night-time crowds over a short period of time. Feedback from visitors, frontline staff and Ticketmaster indicate that the current fee structure is difficult to properly and accurately apply, and needs to be simplified. In 2003, Ticketmaster sold 37% of the tickets to these events in advance by phone and internet. Although having tickets available through Ticketmaster is convenient for both visitors and staff, it is not possible to verify that a ticket buyer is paying the correct rate.

Implementing a unique pricing structure for these events would make the pricing fairer for combinations of people who do not fit the current “family” category, and be more easily understood by the public. The proposed pricing structure would be comparable to other similar attractions outside the Park Board’s purview. For most users, the proposed change would result in lower ticket prices. The only group who would experience a price increase are adults required to pay adult rates rather than be included in a family rate.

### Discussion:

A Committee member requested that there be a cap of 50% placed on the number of advance tickets sold for these special events by Ticketmaster to ensure tickets are available on site.

### Action:

The Finance Committee recommends that the Board approve the proposed ticket price structure for the Miniature Railway special events “Ghost Train” and “Bright Nights”.

## **5. Recreation Software Renewal:**

Norman Mills provided the Finance Committee with a post-pilot report on the results of the recreation software registration project that implemented on-line booking and recreation program registration at Kerrisdale and Trout Lake Community Centres and the Special Events / Field Allocation office in Stanley District. Staff worked with The Active Network from December 2003 to May 2004 evaluating 484 feature requirements that were provided by the Safari software package. The current software version successfully addressed 460 of those features, or 95%, with the remainder considered insignificant. Staff requested two additional enhancements related to setting site level restrictions for certain reports and functions, which the vendor will include in the next release of the software in December 2004. The key custom programming enhancement in the contract, the Gross Pay Profit Loss module, was delivered on time and 97% complete. The largest issues during the pilot project related to network performance and connection problems at Kerrisdale. Problems with database performance significantly improved with a recent move to an upgraded server, and performance of the system will be monitored as more sites are added.

The pilot project Steering Committee recommends that the program be rolled out to six more community centres. Letters of intent indicating willingness to implement the software have been received from the Community Associations for False Creek, Killarney, Kitsilano, Riley Park, Roundhouse, and West End Community Centres. Installation and training can begin at these sites in July 2004.

### Discussion:

A Committee member inquired whether the Community Association’s that were involved with

the pilot were satisfied and was informed by staff that community centre staff and Association Presidents were part of the Steering Committee and concur with the recommendation to move forward.

Action:

The Finance Committee recommends that the Board receive the Recreation Software Renewal report for information.

**6. License / Lease Renewals:**

A. Community Gardens Licenses:

Ron Caswell explained that community gardens have used public park space in Vancouver since the Park Board approved a Community Garden Policy in 1996. In 1999, a new License Agreement replaced the original Lease Agreements, and was intended to serve as a template for all future agreements. For administrative reasons, staff are proposing that all community garden licenses have a common renewal date in order to simplify future renewals and the required Board approval.

Policy issues related to license renewals include:

- Strathcona Community Garden (SGCA) is requesting an increase to a 25 year term from 10 years
- McSpadden Community Garden is not currently run by a non-profit organization, but incorporation is pending
- Mt. Pleasant Community Garden does not agree to pay City water/sewer charges; in addition, a resident opposes the garden due to ongoing garden maintenance concerns
- Cottonwood Community Garden wants its own licence and is requesting a 10 year term
- Kitsilano Community Garden has concerns about the placement of new daycare portables

Delegations:

Muggs Sigurgeirson requested that the Park Board consider a 25 year license for Strathcona Community Garden. She described the public benefits of the garden and explained why it deserves the recognition and stability that a 25 year license would provide.

Susan Kurbis, Environmental Youth Alliance, outlined the benefits of the Cottonwood Community Garden and the Youth Garden. She asked the Committee to consider a 10 year license for the Cottonwood Community Garden.

Discussion:

- Staff commended Strathcona and Cottonwood Community Gardens for their excellent track record, and for establishing their own credibility by developing their gardens' features.
- Staff explained that should the Park Board require land licensed to a Community Garden for an alternate purpose, the agreements contain a termination clause that can be exercised. The Committee requested that staff highlight the termination clause in the renewal report and license agreements.
- The Committee discussed changing the currently approved policy of a 5 year license term to a 10 year renewal term following an initial 5 year term that would allow new gardens to prove their ability to meet the guidelines.
- A Committee member expressed willingness to show Park Board commitment and support of

community gardens with 25 year license terms.

Action:

The Finance Committee recommends that staff incorporate different renewal term options within the context of the existing policy into the Community Garden Renewal report that will be brought to the Board on June 21, 2004.

B. Connaught Fieldhouse Lease:

Liane McKenna told the Committee that the fieldhouse in Connaught Park has been leased to the Meraloma Athletic Club since 1975, and that the club is responsible for all maintenance, and supports the Park Board in many ways. The lease expired in 2002 but a renewal request was delayed as a building assessment was undertaken. Staff are recommending that the lease with Meraloma Club be renewed for \$1/year for a 10 year period from 2002 - 2012.

Discussion:

- The last lease was for a six year term based on a funding commitment.
- The results of the building assessment were satisfactory.

Action:

The Finance Committee recommends that the Board renew the Connaught Fieldhouse lease with the Meraloma Athletic Club for a period of 10 years from 2002 - 2012.

**7. Review of Operating and Capital Statements**

Anita Ho presented the Committee with the Operating Statement for Cycle 4, the period ending April 30, 2004. To date, 33% of the year has passed and 33% of the net budget has been expended. Revenues are currently 24% of budget, with golf revenues at 20%. Gross expenditures are currently 30% of budget, a lower rate than 2003 due to the timing of various expenses. The only overspending issue to date is an item carried forward from last year. The City now charges the Park Board for water used on public lands, and the rate increase is more than the funding increase. Staff has asked the City to reverse its decision to charge the Park Board for use of water on public lands, but has not yet received a response. Overall, net expenditures are projected to meet the budget by the end of the fiscal year.

Staff presented a new reporting format that allows Committee members to review both the Capital Budget and expenditures in committee, and requested feedback on the format.

Action:

The Committee is satisfied with the Capital Statement format and requested the Statement of Capital Expenditures be tabled for review every six months.

**8. Next Meeting:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm. The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2004 at 6:30 pm. The agenda will include:

- Ethical and Environmental Purchasing Policy
- Participatory Budget
- Operating Statement for the period ending June 30, 2004