

Minutes of Meeting
Planning and Environment Committee, Vancouver Park Board
2099 Beach Avenue, Vancouver

DATE OF MEETING: January 11, 2005

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Eva Riccius
Commissioner Suzanne Anton
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Jim Lowden	Director of Stanley District
Lori MacKay	Director of Vancouver East District
Ron Caswell	Manager of Operations, Vancouver East District
Bill Manning	Manager of Operations, Queen Elizabeth District
Mark Vulliamy	Manager of Research and Planning
Paul Montpellier	City Arborist
Tilo Driessen	Strategic Planner
Alan Duncan	Environmental Planner
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

Delegations

Heather Millar	Vancouver Fruit Tree Project Society
Shannon Bradley	Food Policy Team, City of Vancouver
Jeff Malmgren	Vancouver Ultimate League
Doug Hibbins	School District 93 – Conseil Scolaire Francophone
Eric Lott	Vancouver Ultimate League
Simon Cowell	Vancouver Falcons Athletic Club

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm, with the following Agenda:

1. Fruit Trees
2. Stanley Park Cycling Routes
3. Oak and 37th Planning Process
4. Park Naming
5. Approval of Minutes of December 7, 2004 meeting

1. Fruit Trees:

At the February 9, 2004 Board meeting, staff were requested to explore the possibility of planting fruit trees on City lands and report back to the Planning and Environment Committee. Ron Caswell and Paul Montpellier gave the Committee an update about fruit trees on City streets and in parks and community gardens. A series of community and staff discussions identified several benefits, concerns, and opportunities, and staff have prepared an implementation plan for 2005 that includes: research fruit tree varieties; purchase liners and grow on at Langley Tree Farm; plant 6 fruit trees at Slocan Park; make a limited number of trees available for street plantings; plant more fruit, nut and berry trees in parks; explore potential educational programs; and collaborate with Food Policy Task Force and stakeholders. The park bylaw currently prohibits harvesting.

Delegations:

Shannon Bradley told the Committee that the Vancouver Food Policy Team is very supportive of planting fruit trees in parks. This initiative fits well with their Urban Agriculture priority, particularly the educational component.

Heather Millar emphasized the importance of educational programming that encourages people to eat locally. She said that the Fruit Tree Project has had very positive experiences with fruit harvesting, and that competition for fruit has not been a concern.

Discussion:

- The group discussed concerns related to harvesting, including competition, commercial activity, and questions of ownership. Staff acknowledged that enforcement is an ongoing problem, and that there will always be an element of “shared harvest” in community gardening programs. The committee asked if fruit trees could be part of community gardens.
- The Committee recognized the partnership potential for educational programs. Staff described how naturalization initiatives (with the support of local stewardship groups) to plant native fruit, nut and berry trees in such parks as Everett Crowley could help replace invasive species.
- The group acknowledged the opportunity to show leadership by implementing urban agriculture on City land, and the importance of educational programming, which could be led by Social Planning with assistance by the Park Board.
- Staff suggested that an inventory of trees could be posted on the Park Board website to identify the location of food trees.

Next steps:

Staff will bring an information report on fruit trees to the January 31, 2005 Board meeting.

2. Stanley Park Cycling Routes:

At the June 23, 2003 Board meeting, staff was requested to prepare a report about how to make bicycle paths in Stanley Park more useable. Tilo Driessen provided a brief history of cycling paths in Stanley Park, and identified the key issues as: short loops; connectivity between perimeter and internal paths; pavement condition and path width; separation of wheeled and pedestrian path users; and signage.

Discussion:

Staff identified three key areas for development:

- gap between Second Beach and Chilco Street around Lost Lagoon: this improvement requires a financial commitment in the next capital plan
- wooden ramp below the Lion’s Gate Bridge: two options for improving this section are 1) remove trees to widen the available space; and 2) change the approach elevations to a continuous grade, and replace the wooden structure with concrete.
- short loops that provide an alternative to riding the full length of the seawall: require improving signage and introducing shared use on existing paths.

Summary:

The Committee asked staff to convene a working group of cyclists and bladders in order to identify and discuss the different issues, share proposals, and invite ideas and input. Signage for short loops can be funded out of this year’s budget and staff will prepare a capital plan submission for improving the Lost Lagoon-Chilco section.

3. Oak and 37th Planning Process:

Alan Duncan provided the Committee with background information about the proposed public consultation process for the park site at Oak Street and 37th Avenue. Staff were directed at the October 5, 2004 Planning and Environment Committee meeting to design a public consultation process for the development of this site, and to explore partnership options with the Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF) and the Vancouver Ultimate League (VUL).

The CSF and the VUL would like to develop recreational facilities on this site in partnership with the Vancouver Park Board. Under the suggested arrangement, the CSF would fund the capital costs of developing a playing field and a perimeter running trail on the park site and would have an agreement with the Park Board to use them during school hours. The VUL would like to develop four ultimate fields on the site, in an area approximately equivalent to two regular playing fields.

The public consultation process would include:

- hiring a consultant
- holding a public meeting to gather community opinion about park site design (organized and facilitated by the consultant) and whether people are interested in the suggested sports facilities at this site
- developing park design options
- holding a second public meeting to test park design options
- preparing a preferred option for the Board's consideration

Delegations:

Doug Hibbins told the Committee that the CSF supports sound, acceptable park planning, and envisions participating in the park planning process as a major stakeholder. Their primary interest in this initiative is access to a full-sized sports field during school hours on school days, with a secondary interest in access to a peripheral track. The CSF will facilitate a public consultation process for the design and development of their school site at Willow Street and 37th Avenue, and the timing of their public consultation process may be concurrent with the park site development public consultation process.

Jeff Malmgren said that the VUL is interested in having input to the design process and wants to develop a park development plan that is acceptable to as many people as possible.

Discussion:

- Staff told the Committee that the public consultation process will be funded by the CSF and the VUL, and managed by the Park Board, and that financial support for the process does not imply acceptance of the field proposal. The community facilitation process and the board's final decision will determine the plan for the site.
- The group discussed different building development options for the park site, including washrooms, changerooms and a fieldhouse. A delegate commented that the site lends itself to relatively few buildings because of its topography.
- The Committee acknowledged the importance of maintaining natural space in the park.
- Staff told the Committee that there would be an agreement between the Park Board, the CSF, and the VUL defining usage and access times, if the final plan were to include a playfield.

Next Steps:

Park Board staff will prepare a report for submission to the Board on January 17, 2005, confirm that funding is in place for the public consultation process, hire a consultant, and schedule the process. Park design options will be submitted to the Board for consideration by April 2005.

Recommendation:

The Planning and Environment Committee recommends that the Board approve a public facilitation process for the Oak Street and 37th Avenue park site presented at the January 17, 2005 Board meeting, and that the consultancy be funded by the Conseil Scolaire Francophone and the Vancouver Ultimate League.

4. Park Naming:

At the December 13, 2004 Board meeting, staff were requested to report back on naming a park for Rosemary Brown in her former riding, to coincide with International Women's Day. Joyce Courtney explained that a park on Redbud Lane (at Vine Street) was researched on how it fits with Park Naming Guidelines and discussed with Rosemary Brown's family. After assessing the historical and adjacent street naming potential of the park, staff suggested that the following names would meet the criteria of Park Naming Guideline #1:

- Brew Master Park
- Redbud Park
- Vine Park

Staff identified two additional unnamed parks that could also be considered for naming in honour of Rosemary Brown.

Discussion:

- The Committee discussed the three options for naming a park for Rosemary Brown, and considered the suggested names for the park on Redbud Lane that would meet Guideline #1 (Brew Master, Redbud and Vine).
- Staff advised the Committee about the timelines that would need to be followed in order to name the park on Redbud Lane in honour of Rosemary Brown by International Women's Day (March 8, 2005).
- Committee members emphasized the importance of having visually obvious signage at the Redbud park inviting public feedback on the proposed name.

Summary:

Staff will prepare and post signage at the Redbud Lane park about naming it in honour of Rosemary Brown, and gather comments. Based on the results of research and the public consultation process, staff will prepare a park naming recommendation for the Board for the February 28, 2005 Board meeting.

5. Approval of December 7, 2004 Minutes

The minutes of the December 7, 2004 meeting were approved as presented.

6. Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm. The next Planning and Recreation Committee meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2005, at 7:00 pm.