

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

DATE OF MEETING: June 14, 2005

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Commissioner Eva Riccius
Commissioner Anita Romaniuk

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Lori MacKay	Director of Vancouver East
Ron Caswell	Manager of Operations, Vancouver East District
Garry Lum	Supervisor of Recreation Services, Vancouver East District
Booth Palmer	Child and Youth Services Coordinator
Debra Barnes	Project Manager
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

Delegations

Sarah Knoebber	
Cameron Murray	
Sean Mills	
Rob Middleton-Hope	
Robert Buller	Vancouver City Planning Commission
Ray Straatsma	Vancouver City Planning Commission
Sine Kundargi-Girard	False Creek Elementary School
Connor McNamee	False Creek Elementary School
Thomas Laird	False Creek Elementary School
David Grigg	
Audrey Taylor	Kiwassa Neighbourhood House
Dick Woldring	Harbour View Daycare
Chris Midgley	Space2Place Design Inc.
Greg Shorland	
Christian Thorvaldson	
Karen Cowan	
Patrick Mueller	

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm, with the following Agenda:

1. Approval of the minutes of May 3, 2005 meeting
2. 21 Places – Planning Commission Presentation
3. Harbourview Daycare at Burrard
4. Pandora Park Design Concept
5. Fruit Trees Update

1. 21 Places – Planning Commission Presentation:

Robert Buller told the Committee that the 21 Places for the 21st Century Ideas Competition was an effort by the Vancouver City Planning Commission to generate dialogue among Vancouver residents about the best, most creative way to make Vancouver's public realm a more appealing and welcoming place. Ray Straatsma explained that participants were encouraged to choose a favorite public place and propose a change or improvement to it, including ideas for activities or programs that could be offered in a public space. 100 submissions were received and 21 finalists were jury-selected and given the opportunity to present to the appropriate City departments. Finalists presented the following winning ideas to the Park Board's Planning and Environment Committee:

- a. Sound Garden/Harmony Park
- b. Charleston Park Theatre
- c. Bustin' out in Strathcona
- d. Forgotten Places Below Burrard Bridge

a. Sound Garden/Harmony Park:

After a musical introduction by Rob Middleton-Hope, the design team described how a sound sculpture park could be installed in Harmony Park, beside the Burrard Street Bridge on the south bank of False Creek. Sean Mills outlined steps to bring sound sculptures into Harmony Park and introduced the design team. Cameron Murray presented a design idea for Harmony Park that would create acoustic instruments around a central gathering space where the Cultural Harmony Grove is now located. Rob Middleton-Hope spoke about designing instruments for outdoor spaces that create sounds reflecting diverse musical traditions, playable with human hands and by such elements as wind and rain. He emphasized that design criteria needs to be focused on cultural references, acceptable noise levels, interactive potential, durability, and public safety. Sarah Knoebber shared the cultural perspective and intent of the project with the Committee. She feels that we need more spaces to celebrate the natural soundscape of the city, and that this space could be both sanctuary and an easy listening performance space.

b. Charleston Park Theatre:

Grade 7 students from False Creek Elementary told the Committee about their idea for an outdoor theatre in a portion of Charleston Park. Sine Kundari-Girard said there are about 30,000 residents in the area, and the class chose this idea as the best way to improve the park. Connor McNamee described the "Secret of the City", a beautiful waterfall held in a perfect circle that is tucked into the edge of the park. However, the main problem is that public use is limited by an outdoor drainage system that covers about three-quarters of the area, and they hope to improve this. Thomas Laird described different features that could be added, including a totem pole, picnic tables, trash bins, and gardens, and said it would be a low maintenance site.

c. Bustin' out in Strathcona:

Glen Anderson presented his idea to put a sculpture garden in the open grassy space in a park at Gore and Union Streets. He envisions ancestral "bust" sculptures with interpretive panels to commemorate notable local events and the cultural history of the Hogan's Alley area, which was a centre of the city's junk trade. He would also like to install a series of totem poles as a greeting into Strathcona. He wants to involve people in the area and create an interesting space that works for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. A member of the Committee sought clarification on the jurisdiction of the land and staff will look into the Park Board's relationship with this green space.

d. **Forgotten Places Below Burrard Bridge:**

David Grigg identified the area underneath the south end of Burrard Bridge to the east and west as an underutilized “forgotten place”, and suggested several recreational and park uses including community gardens for use by high rise dwellers, under-bridge play space for skateboarding and basketball, and BMX bike trails. He offered to work with staff to do community outreach in the area to share his ideas. The Committee asked about ownership of the land and requested that staff determine the jurisdictions for the area.

Summary:

Staff will investigate the drainage issue in Charleston Park, determine the Park Board’s relationship to the green spaces at Gore and Union Streets, and explore the jurisdiction of the land under the south end of the Burrard Street Bridge. The Committee thanked all the participants for presenting their exciting ideas. The Board will now need to determine if, how, and when the projects can be implemented.

2. Harbourview Daycare at Burrard View Park:

Booth Palmer presented a joint proposal from the Hastings Townsite Childcare Society and the Kiwassa Neighbourhood Services Association to construct a permanent childcare building on Burrard View Park, maintain the existing service (25 spaces for 3-5 years childcare), and increase service by 12 toddler spaces (18-35 months childcare). He outlined recent Board practice regarding childcare services in parks, explained the current situation at Burrard View Park, and described Park Board guidelines for daycare on parks. Garry Lum described the three existing buildings on the site, and identified two possible sites for a permanent childcare facility along with their advantages and disadvantages. Option #1 is the existing location of the daycare portable in the southwest corner of the park. Option #2 would use the southwest area of the park where the fieldhouse is currently located.

Staff recommended that the Park Board consult the public in summer 2005 on the permanent building proposal and the preferred location; conduct a public flyer survey drop to neighbours and playground families; hold a Harbourview Daycare Open House; and report the results of the survey and open house to the Board in fall 2005.

Delegations:

- Audrey Taylor, Manager of Daycare Services at Kiwassa Neighbourhood Services Society, told the Committee that Kiwassa supports this proposal and the community desperately needs a permanent daycare facility in Burrard View Park.
- Dick Woldring, co-chair of the Hastings Townsite Child Care Society, advised the Committee that they have received approval for a provincial grant of \$450,000 to be applied to the project if it is approved by the Vancouver Park Board.

Discussion:

- The group discussed the regulations and guidelines for licensed daycare operations and staff informed members of the Committee that the provincial childcare regulations must be met while the more stringent City of Vancouver design guidelines are not required but are attained as possible. The existing daycare portable building meets city guidelines.
- A member of the Committee inquired about the source for capital funding for the proposed project and staff said it would be funded through the Social Planning Department at no cost to the Board. The public consultation will be done with existing district resources.

Next Steps:

The Committee endorsed the staff recommendation to proceed with consultation on the permanent daycare building proposal, the preferred location, and the expansion of daycare services, and to report the results to the Board in fall 2005.

3. Pandora Park Design Concept:

Debra Barnes presented a concept plan for Pandora Park at Nanaimo and Pandora Streets, and described the community process that identified the neighbourhood's major concerns and suggested areas for improvement. The 2003-05 Capital Plan approved \$210,000 for improvements to Pandora Park, and a preferred concept plan was prepared and presented to the Pandora Park Steering Committee in May 2005. While the community has requested that a master plan for the whole park be developed, there is strong support for applying these funds to improvements in the central area. The preferred concept plan features a central winding path (incorporating a drainage channel) through the park between the north and south ends of Garden Drive and a future skate spot, and relocates the playground, removes some existing walls and fences, reduces hard surfaces, and increases green space. Consultant Chris Midgley said the proposed concept plan links the different parts of park and integrates the overall park space.

Delegations:

- Greg Shorland spoke about the high crime rate in the area and said that safety and lighting are his primary concerns. He said the consultation was not comprehensive and that safety has not been addressed, and asked if crime was considered in the design of the park.
- Christian Thorvaldson told the Committee about his concerns with several aspects of the curving path proposed for the center of the park. He believes noise from the proposed skate spot will adversely affect close residents, and said that bringing another recreation use to the path will introduce conflict on a very busy sidewalk. He objected to a path design that includes a central drainage feature because it will add to surface run-off and create risks for pedestrians. He said that more meetings are needed to address their concerns properly.
- Karen Cowan noted that the dialogue has been driven by fear and anxiety and said she supports efforts to make their park beautiful. She likes the curvy path design because it is interesting.
- Patrick Mueller uses the park with his family and is in favour of the proposed concept plan, which he hopes will proceed. He said it addresses the desires of the community as expressed in the 2001 survey and proposal, and in the 2005 consultation process, and is consistent with the Hastings Community Vision.

Discussion:

- Some delegations expressed concerns about crime and the lack of visibility in the park at night. Chris Midgley told the group that crime was the foremost issue raised at the beginning of the process, and that the intersection at Pandora and Garden was highlighted as a key problem area. Staff said although there are a lot of visual obstacles, it is not possible to regrade the park due to budget constraints. Parks are not generally lit at night, although this issue could be addressed with City Engineering, and environmental safety design will be reviewed in the design development phase.
- The group discussed drainage issues in the park and staff advised the Committee that they are currently starting to address runoff damage in the park's northwest corner.
- A delegation asked the Committee if it was a certainty that the skate spot will be included and staff advised that the Board wishes to promote park activities for youth. The skate spot element would be a single small granite wall, not a large skate park, and would be suitable

for young, local skateboarders. Staff noted that it would be possible to design the path to address concerns about path-user conflicts.

- Lori MacKay highlighted the amount of community involvement that has been invested in Pandora Park in recent years. She told the group that this is a unique opportunity for the park, and there is a desire to do the best job possible to make it a success for the community.

Next Steps:

The Committee asked staff to meet with the Pandora Park Steering Committee to address the issues and receive community input, and to further refine the concept before the item comes to the regular Board meeting on July 11, 2005.

4. Fruit Trees Update:

On February 9, 2004 the Board asked staff to explore opportunities for planting fruit trees in parks and other public areas in support of the Council-approved initiative to develop a sustainable food system for the city. Staff presented an information report to the Board on January 31, 2005 outlining an implementation plan for 2005 and the Board requested that staff report back to the Planning and Environment Committee with an update on the implementation plan. Ron Caswell provided an update on the fruit tree program and described results for each of the six items in the implementation plan, as well as two additional items.

	Implementation Plan Item:	Results:
1.	Research fruit tree varieties	Researched apple and other food tree varieties; heritage varieties at Strathcona Community Garden are not available through industry
2.	Grow out fruit trees at Langley Tree Farm for future planting	95 trees planted at Langley tree farm, another 100 trees will be planted this year
3.	Plant six fruit trees at Slocan Park	4 trees planted at Slocan Park, 2 more will be planted in fall 2005; maintained by community
4.	Modify the tree planting program in parks to include trees with food potential	Fall 2005 – start program of planting low maintenance trees in transitional park areas (between high maintenance and naturalized areas)
5.	Develop and implement educational outreach programs in collaboration with the Food Policy Council and Social Planning staff	Park Board commitment to produce educational materials for use at FPC and Park Board events
6.	Provide information on public fruit trees locations	Arboriculture is developing a web-based photo inventory of interesting trees (including fruit trees) in public areas
Additional Activities:		
	Stone Soup Festival in Grandview Park	Park Board donated 100 fruit trees at Stone Soup Festival; could be expanded to other events
	Environmental Youth Alliance and Strathcona Community Garden fruit tree proposal	Discussion on proposal to plant fruit trees and implement an education program in the City of Vancouver

Staff asked the Committee to indicate if the direction the fruit tree program is taking is agreeable to the Board.

Committee members thanked staff for the update and commented that trees grafted from heritage varieties from Strathcona Community Gardens would do well in our climate, and that there is a real need for education about the program.

5. Approval of May 3, 2005 meeting minutes:

The minutes of the May 3, 2005 meeting were approved as presented.

6. Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm. The next Planning and Recreation Committee meeting is scheduled for July 5, 2005, at 7:00 pm. Possible agenda items include:

- Nelson Park Concept Plan