

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

DATE OF MEETING: March 7, 2006

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Korina Houghton
Commissioner Spencer Herbert
Commissioner Allan De Genova

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Mark Vulliamy	Manager, Research and Planning
Tilo Driessen	Strategic Planner
Barbara Joughin	Committee Secretary

Delegations

Brenda Penton	Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Office
Matt Smed	
Thor Larson	Leeside Stakeholder Group
Michelle Pezel	Leeside Stakeholder Group

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

1. Approval of Minutes of February 21, 2006 meeting
2. Leeside Tunnel Skateboard Site
3. South East False Creek Update

1. Approval of Minutes of February 21, 2006 meeting

The minutes of the February 21, 2006 meeting were approved as presented.

2. Leeside Tunnel Skateboard Site

Mark Vulliamy described the Leeside Tunnel skateboard site, located at the southeast corner of Hastings Park in a tunnel developed by the BC Ministry of Transport during construction of the Cassiar Street underpass. The site is adjacent to the Board's Empire Bowl field on the north and ECOMM on the south. The tunnel was constructed to provide a bicycle and pedestrian corridor under Hastings Street, but plans for a proposed bus loop on the south side of Hastings Street were not finalized and youth discovered the space, installed wooden skateboard structures, and use it to skateboard, ride bikes and paint murals. In 2005, the City removed the wooden skateboard structures and placed gravel on the tunnel floor surface. Following the 2005 death of Leeside's founder, skateboarder and artist Lee Matasi, members of the community requested that the site be formally designated a skate park and named Leeside in his memory.

The tunnel is popular because it is lit, dry, and absorbs sound. However, there are risks (liability, open fires), and an acknowledgement that the current adhoc approach to tunnel management is not sustainable. Operational issues include the need to establish maintenance systems (garbage pickup), graffiti management (containing artistry within tunnel), and recreational programming. Implementation considerations include shoring up the south slope for vehicle access, design and installation of gates, and resurfacing the tunnel floor.

Local community consultations on the site's viability as a skateboard park were held in 2003-05 and a stakeholder group was formed. The vision for the site is to enhance youth space with both skateboarding and BMX biking, and maintain vehicle access between Empire Bowl field and ECOMM.

Delegations

- Brenda Penton told the Committee that the Hastings-Sunrise Community Policing Centre has been involved with the project since 2002. She said that youth activities in the tunnel are a positive community asset, and commented that the gravel placed on the surface prevents skateboard and BMX bike activities and is a detriment to the community.
- Matt Smed said the tunnel provides a safe, clean space for youth and noted there is considerable community support for the project and opportunities for fundraising. He would like to see the site design place more emphasis on skateboarding than on BMX biking.
- Thorn Larson highlighted the importance of Leaside Tunnel as an accessible space that gives youth a dry place to go at all hours to express creativity, and said the process of creating a skateboard park at Leaside Tunnel will help bring closure on Lee Matasi's death to the community.

Discussion

- A member of the Committee requested clarification of the site's jurisdiction. Staff explained that while the site itself is within the jurisdiction of the City's Engineering department, others have to be consulted, including the Park Board, ECOMM, and the provincial Ministry of Transportation, and there is a lot of coordination between agencies. Staff acknowledged City Engineering for its support and cooperation.
- Staff said there are already several skateboard parks located in the northeast quadrant of the city, and noted the need to distribute the service, fit the concept into the overall skatepark strategy, and get clarity from the City. However, the Leaside Tunnel site is valuable because it has a roof, an evolving stakeholder group (the Leaside Stewardship Group), and encompasses both BMX bike and skateboard activities.
- The Committee discussed how the project would be funded and staff said City Engineering would cover the costs of shoring up the south slope for vehicle access, and gate design and installation. The Board would pay for resurfacing the tunnel floor, and the recreational elements. There are strong expressions of support from the community for the initiative, and potential avenues for community funding will be explored.
- The group questioned the need to limit access to the tunnel by installing gates. The primary concern was related to the risk associated with fires on the site, and the need for gates should be assessed in terms of the cost of their design and installation.

The group discussed how to move the project forward quickly while continuing to work with the different partners to clarify and formalize relationships and develop site management systems. Reports will be submitted to the Board and City Council once funding and design arrangements are finalized.

Next Steps

The Committee expressed strong support for the project and requested that it be moved forward as quickly as possible. Staff advised that a stakeholder meeting will occur later this month and that the Board and City Council will receive a report in April.

3. South East False Creek Update

Tilo Driessen provided an update on the South East False Creek (SEFC) project and outlined the timeline for the ODP amendments, selection of the developer, and the rezoning, permitting, and inspection processes. The City's capacity to process applications for rezoning, permitting, and inspections is projected to be very tight over the next 1 ½ years, and Olympic and corporate (Woodwards, SEFC private lands, RAV and related) projects will be prioritized. Application and consultation processes for five SEFC private land rezoning sites (north of 1st Avenue) are underway, and a further three sites will follow. The public realm plan has been commissioned, and construction of integrated site services has commenced, with the official groundbreaking scheduled for March 10, 2006. Site servicing includes stormwater management, and a biofiltration wetland will be part of the infrastructure.

Park design will parallel the public realm process, using the same consultants, and upcoming public open houses will address the public realm plan, the heritage commemorative plan, and park and bioremediation designs. Park design should be completed by the end of April and construction will likely take place between fall 2006 and spring 2007. The permitting process for the 30,000 sq ft community and boating centre will start in May 2006. It will be built as part of the Olympic village, then retrofitted to serve as a community and boating centre with indoor programming for exclusive community centre uses, shared uses, and exclusive boating centre uses. Council recently approved the False Creek neighbourhood energy utility, and the sewer heat-recovery energy plant will likely be housed on SEFC park land.

Discussion:

- Staff explained the different roles assigned to the developer and to the project office, and said that the developer will be selected within two weeks of tonight's ODP decision.
- 50-60 underground parking stalls will be provided for the community and boating centre, and use of alternate transportation will be encouraged.
- Staff described preliminary programming for the two acre rainwater wetland and play park. A member of the Committee asked if a play area could be properly constructed in a wetland and staff explained that the wetland will be contained in an area that is not currently a wetland and will not affect the play area.
- The bikeway from Cambie Street to Science World will remain open to the public and the waterfront will be completed by spring 2007.

Next Steps

The Board will receive the park design and the rezoning application for the development of the community and boating centre in early summer 2006.

4. Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2006.