

Minutes of Meeting
Planning Committee, Vancouver Park Board

DATE OF MEETING: June 20, 2006

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners

Commissioner Korina Houghton, Chair
Commissioner Allan De Genova
Commissioner Spencer Herbert
Commissioner Heather Holden
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Lori MacKay	Director of Vancouver East District
Terry Walton	Manager of Recreation Services, Stanley District
Kate Davis-Johnson	Manager of Park Development
Susan Gordon	Coordinator, Arts and Culture
Daisy Chin	Special Events Coordinator
Booth Palmer	Child and Youth Services Coordinator
Barbara Joughin	Committee Secretary

Delegations

Eric Harms	Hastings Community Association
Frances Moorcroft	
Tom Caverly	Volleyball BC
Dominike Picard	
John Lynn	
Barry Sharbo	
Ch'an Bodhi Cede	Burrardview Community Association
Robin Willies	Hastings Community Association
Harry Mah	Burrardview Community Association
Jim Clive	Kits Beach Volleyball Association
Virginia Downes	Hastings Park Conservancy
Giovanni Coletta	Hastings Park Conservancy
Roslyn McLellan	Coalition of HandiDart Users
Janet Lee	Art in the Garden
David Tracey	Strathcona Community Gardeners Society
Joanne Hochu	Strathcona Community Gardeners Society
Muggs Sigurgeirson	Strathcona Community Gardeners Society
Michella Frosch	Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale
Barrie Mowat	Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale
John Nightingale	Vancouver Aquarium
Judy Kirk	Kirk and Co.
Meghan Clarke	Kirk and Co.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm, with the following Agenda:

1. New Brighton Park Volleyball
2. Delegation – Coalition of handyDART Users
3. Delegation – Art in the Garden
4. Strathcona Community Gardens Wetland
5. Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale
6. Vancouver Aquarium Technical Review and Consultation Process
7. Approval of Minutes of June 6, 2006 Meeting

1. New Brighton Park Volleyball

Doug Taylor presented the Committee with a proposal to locate a six-court sand volleyball facility in New Brighton Park. He explained that \$90,000 was allocated for a 12-court sand volleyball facility in the 2000 capital plan, and a Volleyball Task Force was formed at that time to recommend possible sites for public consultation. He reviewed the lengthy process that followed to try to select a site for sand volleyball and described the evaluation criteria and the sites that were recently revisited as potential locations for a six-court volleyball facility (John Hendry Park, Killarney Park, Fraser River Park, New Brighton Park, and Hastings Park). Most did not meet the evaluation criteria and were screened out, including Hastings Park, because the Park Board does not at this time have jurisdiction over this site. Staff are proposing that six sand volleyball courts be installed in New Brighton Park where the current tennis courts are located.

Staff outlined the community's concerns, described how the site evaluation criteria apply to New Brighton Park, and concluded that, based on the other parks that were considered, locating a sand volleyball facility at New Brighton Park would have the least impact.

Delegations

1. Robin Willies said that the proposed location for volleyball sand courts is already reserved for marshland and a creek which will be an environment that can be enjoyed year-round.
2. Ch'an Cede said this proposal appears to reverse the plan for passive recreational use of New Brighton Park. He is concerned about the impacts on parking and on plans to daylight the creek and build a saltmarsh, and noted the existing tennis courts are not well used because they are in poor condition.
3. Eric Harms told the Committee that a 1991 report on New Brighton Park defined it as passive natural park space with an informal family picnic area and waterfront access. He said that the community participated in a multi-year planning process that identified a salt marsh area that they expect to be developed in the location proposed for the volleyball courts. He offered to work with the Park Board to find an appropriate location for volleyball. However, programmed recreational activities should not occur in New Brighton Park.
4. Frances Moorcroft said that many hours of planning New Brighton Park resulted in a consensus that activities in the park should be passive and non-programmed. She stated that beach volleyball activities cannot be combined with quiet enjoyment of the park but the noise made by volleyball enthusiasts will not create a problem at Hastings Park.
5. Tom Caverly said 200 members of Volleyball BC that live around New Brighton Park play volleyball on a regular basis, and 1000 members living on the east side of Vancouver now travel to the west side to play. He said that a six court facility is not large and represents about 30 players. Volleyball BC would like to create a youth club with activities programmed from Monday to Thursday. He hopes the decision will be based on whether or not the community will benefit from a volleyball facility in New Brighton Park.

6. Dominique Picard would welcome volleyball courts in the neighbourhood but in a different location because it is not a good fit for New Brighton Park. She noted that volleyball players do not need to be on valuable waterfront and said that this activity is not compatible with existing passive and picnic use in the park.
7. John Lynn said the real problem is lack of access to New Brighton Park and suggested that part of the park be used for additional parking so more people can enjoy the park.
8. Barry Sharbo asked staff why New Brighton Park is proposed as an option for volleyball when the community has said it does not support this activity. Staff responded that Hastings Park is not currently available as an option and New Brighton Park is proposed because it is the only site with sufficient available space.
9. Harry Mah told the Committee that the Burrardview Community Association opposes replacing the tennis courts with beach volleyball and said the tennis courts need to be better maintained. He suggested that it is better to place the volleyball courts in a long-term location than to waste money on moving them when the salt marsh is developed. He asked the Board to reject the proposal for beach volleyball in New Brighton Park and suggested that Empire Bowl is a better location.
10. Jim Clive told the Committee that more sand volleyball courts are needed in Vancouver and that because youth age 13 and older want to play the sport, it would be a good thing for young local players to have courts at New Brighton Park.
11. Virginia Downes told the Committee that she is opposed to beach volleyball at New Brighton Park and volleyball courts should be located in Hastings Park.
12. Giovanni Coletta said more people will play tennis at New Brighton Park with better maintained tennis courts. He does not support volleyball or more parking in the parkspace, which should be revitalized for people to use for walking.

Discussion

- A member of the Committee asked about the impact on beach volleyball if the proposed site for New Brighton Park was not approved. Staff explained that although the search has been exhaustive for suitable sites for volleyball programming and tournaments, it has been difficult to find a site large enough and that meets the evaluation criteria. Other than Hastings Park, which is currently not available, New Brighton Park is the only park with enough room for more than a few courts. The money allocated for volleyball has been held for six years and may need to be reallocated, and future allocations for this purpose would need to be reassessed in the capital planning process.
- The group discussed the development of the site for volleyball courts. Staff noted that sand would be placed over the existing tennis court asphalt and a retaining structure and fencing are required around the perimeter.
- A member of the Committee acknowledged the community's efforts to conserve Hastings Park and develop New Brighton Park and said it would be a backward step to place a volleyball facility where the salt marsh will be located. It would be better to keep moving forward with an overall vision for the community and include volleyball in the long-term plan for Hastings Park.
- Staff explained that the approved concept plan for New Brighton Park includes a salt marsh and a stream connecting Hastings Park to Burrard Inlet. The timeline depends on the completion of work in the racetrack area in Hastings Park but is projected to be underway within the next ten years. Therefore, volleyball courts in New Brighton Park are proposed as an interim facility that will be removed when the stream and salt marsh are constructed in the future. A member of the Committee said that spending \$90,000 on a facility that will require future additional expenses for relocation is not a good idea.

- A Commissioner asked if the need for volleyball tournament space can be met with several smaller facilities dispersed across different sites. Staff explained that organized play and programs for youth teams are not feasible at smaller facilities.
- The Committee discussed possible short and long term locations for casual and programmable sand volleyball courts and suggested that the evaluation criteria be revised to include smaller facilities for casual use. A Commissioner asked staff to analyze the costs and benefits of locating spaces for both 6 - 12 courts and 1 - 2 courts for casual use around the city.
- A new master plan is currently being developed for John Hendry Park and although available space in the park is very limited, volleyball could be included in the design discussions. Staff noted that other potential sites include Jericho Hill and Hastings Park but said that going back to review the same parks will likely not yield new results.
- The Committee discussed whether the proposal for sand volleyball courts at New Brighton Park should be reviewed and decided by the Board as a whole. A member of the Committee said the Board needs to review the overall need for volleyball in the community. Other Committee members said that New Brighton Park should not be considered as an option for beach volleyball and the proposal should not be forwarded to the Board.

Next Steps

The Planning Committee asked staff to report back to the Committee in the fall on:

- potential locations in Vancouver for casual sand volleyball, excluding New Brighton Park; and
- the advantages and disadvantages of casual (1 - 2 courts) and programmable (6 – 12 courts) spaces for sand volleyball in Vancouver.

2. Delegation – Coalition of handiDART Users

Roslyn McLellan spoke to the Committee on behalf of the Coalition of handyDART Users (CHU) and gave regrets for the early departure of her co-presenter Tammy Van der Kamp. She told the Committee that CHU has been working to find ways to improve the handyDART service for its users. CHU has asked TransLink to replace current short-term operator contracts for the service with a plan for all handyDART services in the Greater Vancouver Regional District to become a wholly-owned TransLink subsidiary run like the Coast Mountain Bus Company or the West Coast Express. They believe that this will result in more efficient, centralized ride coordination, which will free up more rides for non-priority trips.

Users requesting handyDART services for recreation and cultural purposes are currently limited by policies that restrict access to these services. Due to the high level of demand for the handyDART service, criteria for booking trips do not allow pick-up of users at no fixed address – including parks and events held in parks – and recreational and social trips are given a lower priority. As a result, users of handyDART experience inequitable access to places and events most other people take for granted.

Ms. McLellan asked the Committee to endorse CHU's proposal to TransLink to restructure the management and delivery of handyDART services.

Discussion

A member of the Committee said that the Park Board has a duty to present TransLink with the Board's position on the difficulties handyDART users face in accessing parks. A Commissioner offered to provide a letter from the Park Board requesting that booking requests to handyDART for parks and recreation locations be given a higher priority.

Results

The Planning Committee asked staff to draft a letter to TransLink for the Chair of the Board's signature requesting improved access to and from parks and recreational facilities using the handyDART system.

3. Delegation – Art in the Garden

Janet Lee presented the Committee with a proposal to hold an Art in the Garden event in Trimble Park in partnership with the West Point Grey Community Garden. Art in the Garden is a free annual public event that showcases and sells garden-focused art work by emerging artisans. This event has been held in her yard since 1999 but as it is becoming too large to continue in that location, members of the West Point Grey Community Garden suggested a collaboration through their Saturday events program. Ms. Lee requested that the Park Board approve the request to hold the Art in the Garden event in Trimble Park in August 2006, allow use of the public washrooms, and minimize permit and insurance fees for the event.

Terry Walton provided the Committee with a review of how Special Events Policy criteria are applied to similar event requests. Although the policy recognizes that event coordinators need to raise some of their revenues through sales, the policy says that events cannot focus on revenue generation and that sale of goods must be directly related to the event. Daisy Chin described how the Special Events Policy relates to this event request and explained that suggestions on how to modify the proposal to fit the Board's policy requirements were not acceptable to the proponent. She said that staff are concerned that approving this request may set a precedent for activities in parks such as craft fairs and other events that are based on the sale of products. Susan Gordon noted that in Stanley Park, artists have a permit to sell their work but they must display the process of producing art on site.

Discussion

- A Commissioner asked staff how this kind of event would be classified for the purpose of indemnification and staff responded that it would be classified as a private event and would likely not be eligible for inclusion.
- The delegation told the Committee that parks are not just for passive or sport use but are also for the enjoyment of art. A Commissioner noted that selling art is not part of the Park Board's mandate.
- A member of the Committee acknowledged that some public art events may facilitate community development and expressed interest in reviewing how the Special Events Policy might better support these purposes.
- The Committee said they are very supportive of arts programming in parks but there are policies and guidelines in place that need to be followed. The Committee suggested that the

delegation continue to work with staff to modify the proposed event to meet the requirements of the Board's Special Events Policy.

Results

The Committee said that the proposal for Art in the Garden cannot be supported in its current form and the proponent was asked to continue to work with staff to modify the proposal to make it consistent with the Park Board Special Events Policy and Guidelines.

4. Strathcona Community Gardens Wetland

Kate Davis-Johnson introduced a delegation from the Strathcona Community Gardeners Society (the Society) and provided a brief history of their efforts to develop a pond at the Strathcona Community Garden. The proposal is defined in a Memorandum of Understanding between the Park Board and the Society which requires that any impacts from soil or water contamination be mitigated prior to final approval of the project by the Board. She noted that this requirement is still outstanding.

David Tracey described the mission and activities of the Society and their reasons for proposing to create a wetland. The area is currently overrun with invasive species and is used illegally by sex-trade workers and campers, and a year-round pond will displace these activities and provide an ecological water source for the gardens. However, soil testing revealed the presence of contaminants in concentrations higher than the Park Board's standards for public use. The Society has determined that this problem can be solved by placing a liner between the contaminated soil and the pond to create a separation from public use, at no cost to the Board. There is some urgency to the situation as the Society is in danger of losing a grant that is conditional on the Board's approval of the project by August. He asked the Board to approve the project so the Society can receive the grant money.

Staff informed the Committee that the Board cannot approve the project until the proposal to mitigate the soil contamination has been certified by a professional with liability insurance. Staff explained to the Committee that soil contamination has been an issue with this project from the beginning because there are undue liability risks for the Board which may arise in the future if the work is not certified by a professional with liability insurance.

Discussion

The group discussed the Board's obligation for due diligence as owners of the land and the Society's need to receive the funding that is threatened by any further delay in the approval of the project. The Committee asked the Society to determine the cost of certifying the soil contamination review that has already been done and the cost of the mitigation of the soil contamination. Commissioner De Genova said he would help the Society access the funds that are needed to complete the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding. Park Board staff said they will communicate with the funding agency regarding approval requirements of the project.

Summary

The Committee requested that the Strathcona Community Gardeners Society and Park Board staff find a way to complete the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

5. Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale

Susan Gordon provided a history of the development of the International Sculpture Biennale and introduced Barrie Mowat, curator of the current exhibit, Open Spaces 2005/2006. She told the Committee that pieces for this exhibit began to be installed in October 2005 and public response has been variable, ranging from initial reactivity to more thoughtful comments that have been received after the art pieces have been onsite for a while. She noted that public art stimulates people to respond to spaces that are important to them. Public responses include whether the works are installed permanently or temporarily and assumptions that the exhibition is at the public's expense. However, all costs are covered by the Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale. The sculptures are not permanent but are intended to be installed temporarily for a period of 18 months. The scale of the project has changed as it has been implemented, and at this time all of the 18 sculptures in this series that are intended for parks in Vancouver have been installed. In addition, some issues that arose around lighting and site cleanup have been addressed.

Delegations

Barrie Mowat presented an update on the Vancouver Sculpture Biennale: Open Spaces 2006/2006, the fourth and largest Sculpture Biennale to be held in Vancouver. This exhibit is part of a ten-year series where large-scale public art sculptures are installed temporarily in public areas throughout Vancouver, including Vanier Park, Kitsilano Beach Park, Harbour Green Park, Devonian Park, Sunset Beach, and English Bay. He described the project's managing team, and gave details about its educational program, marketing and public relations campaign, sponsorships, and media responses. He said the Sculpture Biennale series will provide an "Olympics of the arts" as a cultural festival leading up to and paralleling the 2010 Winter Olympics, and their hope is that two pieces from each biennale will become permanent legacy pieces that remain in the public domain.

Staff advised the Committee that all donated work will go through the standard public art review process.

Michella Frosch expressed appreciation for the partnership with the Park Board and said it would not otherwise be possible to present these works of art in Vancouver.

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked the delegation about the curatorial advisory council and whether a juried process has been considered. Another member expressed appreciation that the project integrates art in parks with outside activity. It was suggested that more signage be provided. The delegation thanked the Committee for the Park Board's support.

Summary

The Planning Committee received the update of the Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale for information.

Commissioner Holden declared a conflict with the following agenda item and excused herself from the meeting at this time.

6. Vancouver Aquarium Technical Review and Consultation Process

John Nightingale introduced Judy Kirk, whose company Kirk and Co. will be leading the community consultation process on the Vancouver Aquarium's proposed expansion plan (the Plan), and invited her to present an outline of the draft consultation plan.

Judy Kirk recommended that the consultation be a combined Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver Aquarium (the Aquarium) consultation in order to enhance the credibility of the process. The planning and implementation of the Plan will be guided by the Consultation Steering Committee, comprised of Park Board, Aquarium, and Kirk and Co. staff. She told the Committee that the consultation process will be very comprehensive and will be designed to create many different opportunities for people to participate comfortably. She highlighted several of the proposed consultation methods, including a discussion guide and feedback form, a newspaper insert, and a public attitude survey.

The consultation topics and questions are not yet developed, and Ms. Kirk emphasized that careful development of the questions is critical and said that this process will not be rushed. Preliminary topics include design objectives, land use, and feedback on the revitalization proposal including animals and animal spaces.

The Steering Committee will bring recommendations about what will be consulted on to the Board for approval on July 10, 2006. After receiving the Board's comments, the Steering Committee will finalize what will be consulted on, and initial implementation of the program will begin in August, followed by full implementation in September. The data will then be analyzed and summarized in a report by the end of October.

Piet Rutgers outlined the elements that will be part of the technical review of the proposed expansion, including: soils and terrain, vegetation including trees, hydrology, fish and wildlife, aesthetic and cultural resources, waste materials/sewage disposal, utilities, pedestrian and traffic circulation, and parking. He noted that a summary of the findings will be included in the discussion guide that will accompany the community consultation.

Discussion

- The Committee Chair clarified that the community consultation plan will be approved by both Park Board staff and the Board.
- A Commissioner expressed concern about the credibility of the process and how the Park Board and individual Commissioners may be affected. The consultant told the Committee that the consultation process will include controversial topics, and committed her company to the delivery of a credible process. She said that she will ensure that all necessary information is included in the discussion guide, and that the consultation topics and questions are carefully developed to address all relevant issues to the appropriate level.
- A Commissioner stated that the consultation must include a question about the Aquarium's breeding program, and a member of the Committee requested that a question about using park land for keeping cetaceans in captivity be included. Another member of the Committee noted that there is a public perception that the Parks Control Bylaw insufficiently addresses some issues and asked that the issue of the bylaw be considered for inclusion in the Plan in some form.
- The group discussed the importance of communicating clearly that the Board's decision on the proposed Aquarium expansion will consider the results of the community consultation process along with the results of the technical review and other considerations. Staff noted

that the consultation results will help inform the Board's decision, and allow Council to determine the scope of the development permit process.

- A member of the Committee drew attention to the wording (revitalization versus expansion) that might be used in the process.
- A member of the Committee suggested that the consultation allow people to comment on the option of a different use for this area of the park than what exists and is being proposed. The consultant acknowledged that the consultation is about land use impacts in the park and could be designed to allow people to look at other options or features within an option.
- The Committee discussed how to include different stakeholders, and the consultant said everyone must have the same information and be asked the same questions. In addition, there must be a system in place to prevent repeat submissions and to check for residency.
- A member of the Committee identified broad public concern about the issues and inquired how there could be a wider consultation on the design of the Plan. The consultant said it is possible to include a pre-consultation component on the design of the Plan.

Summary

The Committee asked staff to bring a report to the Board in July on the proposed community consultation plan and technical review for the Vancouver Aquarium revitalization proposal.

7. Approval of Minutes of June 6, 2006 meeting

The minutes of the June 6, 2006 meeting were approved as presented.

8. Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 4, 2006.