

**Minutes of Meeting
Planning Committee, Vancouver Park Board**

DATE OF MEETING: April 10, 2007

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Heather Holden, Chair
Commissioner Spencer Herbert

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Ron Caswell	Manager of Operations, Vancouver East District
Barbara Joughin	Committee Secretary

Delegations

1. Len Kydd	Cottonwood Community Garden
2. Beth McLaren	Cottonwood Community Garden

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

1. Approval of minutes of March 20, 2007 meeting
2. Cottonwood Community Gardens Expansion

1. Approval of Minutes of March 20, 2007 meeting

The minutes of the March 20, 2007 meeting were deferred for approval to the next Planning Committee meeting.

2. Cottonwood Community Garden Expansion

Ron Caswell presented a community proposal for the expansion of Cottonwood Community Garden, located at the southeast corner of Strathcona Park at Raymur and Malkin Avenues.

In 1992, the existing Strathcona Community Garden lease was extended to include 80 new garden plots at the Cottonwood Community Garden site. Cottonwood Community Garden (CCG) was granted a 10 year license agreement extension in October 2005. The existing garden (7800 m²) is partially on Park Board land and partially on the Malkin Avenue street right-of-way. The proposed expansion site (1900 m²) is located adjacent to Raymur Avenue east of the running oval. In 2006, the Park Board cleared this site of overgrowth to help discourage illicit activities. In February 2007, Cottonwood Community Garden submitted a Notice of Intent to the Park Board requesting an expansion of Cottonwood Community Garden into the cleared area.

The site needs to be cleaned up and graded and requires a cap of clean fill and topsoil before the area is suitable for gardening. Staff explained that site cleanup and grading would proceed regardless of whether the garden expansion is approved by the Board, and additional soil is required to bring the area up to grade. The gardeners may be able to provide clean fill and donated equipment to prepare the area. All imported soil must meet Park Board guidelines.

An underground sewer vault is located at the corner of Malkin and Raymur Avenues that may need replacement in the future and this situation must be resolved before construction is approved. A community consultation process on the proposed expansion will be conducted in the area.

Staff requested direction from the Planning Committee to proceed with steps toward expanding the community garden, including:

- conducting a community consultation process (Park Board)
- planning the garden layout, fences or structures and cost and schedule estimates (CCG)
- preparing a staff report for review and consideration by the Board (Park Board)

Delegations:

1. Len Kydd described how Cottonwood Community Garden developed the existing gardens and outlined their history with accessing fill, topsoil, and equipment. He told the Committee that CCG can source clean fill and organic soil but will appreciate any assistance the Park Board is able to provide.
2. Beth McLaren told the Committee that the current garden site is 70% common area and 30% garden plots (80 plots), and the new site would be mostly garden plots with common areas around the edges.

Discussion

- A member of the Committee asked if the expansion plan includes accessible, raised beds for people with limited mobility. A delegate explained that a potential area for accessible garden plots has been identified in the plan. A community garden member is researching funding and partnerships for developing tabletop gardens and automatic watering systems, and if fundraising is successful, up to 30 plots may be made available for this purpose.
- Staff described the community consultation that would be followed prior to any development of the site. A handout describing the proposal to change parkland will be distributed in the area and all feedback will be collated. A delegate explained that Strathcona Community Garden Society is the legal society for Cottonwood Community Garden and said that both Boards have reviewed and approved the expansion. Staff noted that as an existing community garden, requirements for non-profit status, license agreement and proper operating procedures are already in place, and are applicable to the proposed expansion.
- The Committee discussed the timeline for developing the new garden site. The ground must be leveled, capped, and covered with topsoil. Gardeners will plant grass first and develop plots on demand. They estimate that it will take about two years to fill plots once the cap is in place.

Next Steps

The Planning Committee asked staff to:

- undertake a community consultation process on the proposed expansion of Cottonwood Community Garden
- receive a plan for the proposed expansion from Cottonwood Community Garden
- prepare a report for the Board's review.

3. Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2007.