

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation  
Services & Budgets Committee Meeting  
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on  
Tuesday, March 16, 2010**

**ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners**

Loretta Woodcock, Chair  
Aaron Jasper, Vice Chair  
Constance Barnes

**Park Board Staff**

Meg Elliott	Senior Business Analyst
Peter Kuran	Acting General Manager
Liane McKenna	Director, Vancouver East District
Piet Rutgers	Director, Planning and Operations
Michel Desrochers	Research Planner
Hart Nijjar	Recorder

**Delegations:**

- Craig Sheather, First Tee of Metro Vancouver/YMCA
- Robyn Moore, First Tee of Metro Vancouver/YMCA
- Craig Woods, President, Vancouver Field Sports Federation

Commissioner Robertson was absent.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm, with the following agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of January 19th, 2010
2. First Tee Golf Program
3. 2009 Year End Position
4. Jericho Field Proposal

**1. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Services and Budgets Committee held on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 were adopted as circulated.

## 2. First Tee Program

Staff presented information on the proposed Host Facility Agreement between the First Tee of Metro Vancouver/YMCA and the Park Board and introduced Craig Sheather and Robyn Moore, representatives from the First Tee of Metro Vancouver/YMCA. The First Tee program helps positively impact the lives of youth through golf and also fosters the development of important life skills such as honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy, and judgement, which are the nine core values of the First Tee program. Requirements to bring this program to Vancouver are: chapter status from the World Golf Foundation, a program operator, and an operating facility.

Staff first presented information to the Board regarding the program in 2008 where the program description, requirements, and Park Board commitments were outlined. The Board directed staff to work on a facility use agreement with the First Tee Program to enable the program to obtain access to one of the Park Board golf courses.

Since this directive was received by staff, an application for chapter status has been put through to the program by the YMCA, which has volunteered to be the operating partner and charity to run the program. The YMCA, in partnership with the Kids First Sport Foundation, has fundraised approximately \$80,000 that will be put towards running the program in its first year. It is anticipated that the program will run through July and August this year with approximately 250 youths participating.

The Host Facility Agreement outlines that the Fraserview Golf Course will be used for the program for 250 hours per year at minimum. The course will be used for an initial five year term, with the possibility of two further five year terms. Extensions to the contract will be based on the success of the program, which will be reported on annually and any future capital investment towards the program recognized. The agreement also establishes rates for facility use whereby program participants will pay the sunset rate for youth and will pay the existing youth rate for use of the driving range. Staff will work with the First Tee of Metro Vancouver/YMCA on advertising and marketing the program and ensure the insurance coverage will meet appropriate standards. The proposed insurance coverage is acceptable to Risk Management and a dispute resolution mechanism is in place.

Staff asked for the Committee's endorsement of the First Tee Youth Golf Host Facility Agreement and for a recommendation of support for the Agreement to move forward to the Board.

### Discussion

A Committee member asked for clarification on the fee structure and options for youth who may not be able to pay the full fee. Although youth are required to pay fees, a mechanism in place to provide support for those who can not afford the full cost of the

program. The fee that participants pay will be used to cover the cost of their instruction program and use of the facility.

A Committee member inquired whether the Park Board will lose revenue due to prime tee times being allocated to the program. Staff noted that the times allocated to the program will not be during peak hours, but will be conducive to youth participation and the program will be revenue neutral for the Park Board. In addition, the insurance for the program will be held by the YMCA.

The Committee expressed concern about permanent logos from funding partners, but staff advised that there will be no corporate marketing on Park Board property although the First Tee program will be recognized.

A Committee member inquired whether the program will be accessible to and foster the participation of youth with disabilities. Mr. Sheather responded that although that user group is not being targeted at the moment, components are in place to allow for their participation in the future. Furthermore, the program will aim for parity between genders and ethnicities by having a similar number of boys and girls involved and advertising the program to the diverse demographic surrounding the Fraserview Golf Course.

The Committee asked Mr. Sheather to elaborate on outreach strategies and how youth will become involved in the program. Mr. Sheather stated that the site location is ideal to encourage involvement as there are at-risk youth in that area and the YMCA already has a relationship with the Killarney Community Centre, John Oliver Secondary School, and other YMCA chapters and can communicate with these groups to raise the profile of the program.

The Committee thanked staff for their presentation and endorsed bringing the Host Facility Agreement before the Board for approval during the April 19 Board Meeting.

### **3. 2009 Year End Position (Operating Budget, Donations, Stanley Park Restoration Fund)**

Staff presented information on the 2009 financial statements. Overall, the Park Board generated \$3.1 million more in revenue than budgeted, but also spent \$2.2 million more on expenses. The Park Board generated \$3.8 million more in actual revenue and had \$4.6 million more in expenses than in 2008.

In terms of revenue, most programs generated more actual revenue than was generated in 2008. In particular, recreation generated \$1.5 million more in 2009 than the year before, representing a 14% increase in actual revenue. Programs that generated less actual revenue compared to 2008 include leases and donations (down \$9,000 compared to 2008), and neighbourhood parks, street trees, nursery, building maintenance, and sanitation (down \$75,000 compared to 2008). However, overall, there was a 10% increase in actual revenue generated for 2009 compared to 2008.

Expense comparisons between 2008 and 2009 also show an increase for 2009. The Park Board spent more on all programs to generate more revenue, with the exception of parking and golf.

In comparing the overall 2009 actual revenues to budget, the Park Board had a revenue surplus of over \$3.1 million. When comparing actual expenses to budget, there was a surplus in payroll and utilities but deficits in city equipment and supplies, services, and transfers. Due to the higher than budgeted revenues and because certain other conditions were met, the Park Board was able to transfer \$400,000 to the Revenue Stabilization Reserve (a restricted reserve used to reduce the impact of revenue fluctuations beyond the Board's control). After this transfer the Board accounts showed a surplus of \$933,000.

However, per the requirements of the Global Budget a number of adjustments are required to determine the true year end financial position. These adjustments required reductions totalling \$1.1 million, which resulted in the 2009 Operating Budget ending the year with a deficit of \$189,000 or approximately 0.3% of the Board's net budget. The Park Board is unable to keep any of the savings generated during 2009 and will face a tight budget in 2010.

The donation program generated \$786,000 in revenue, which is viewed positively by staff due to the difficult economic times and the general reduction in donations received by other non-profits and charities. The closing balance for the donations reserve totalled \$2.6 million at year end.

The Stanley Park Restoration fund opened the year with a balance of \$1.9 million. During the course of the year, \$68,000 in revenue was generated for the fund, while \$1.09 million was spent on related expenses (largely for Prospect Point). As such, the closing balance for the fund at year end was \$913,000. The remaining amount will be put towards legacy work and the Forest Management Plan.

The Committee thanked staff for the update and asked staff to report back on revenue generated by concessions and leases as well as from rentals, weddings, and special events, and revenue generated by subsidized programs.

#### **4. Jericho Field Proposal**

Staff presented an update on the two synthetic turf sites to be constructed at Jericho and Memorial South Parks with the purpose of addressing questions that have arisen regarding the size of the playfields. The Board approved the two sites for installation of synthetic turf at the February 8 Board Meeting, and since that time rugby groups have expressed interest in the synthetic turf playfield at Jericho. Other groups have also expressed interest in having a larger playfield constructed.

Since 2000, the main goal of the synthetic turf program has been to accommodate soccer user groups by increasing the overall supply of synthetic turf fields and reducing the impact of grass field closures during the rainy season. A typical soccer field is 64 metres

wide by 100 metres long, which is the size of the synthetic turf fields at Point Grey, Van Tech, and Trillium. Furthermore, 70% of fields in the suburbs are equal to or smaller than this size. In terms of field size for user groups, rugby fields can be a maximum of 70 metres wide by 144 metres long, adult soccer requires a field to be 45 to 90 metres wide by 90 to 120 metres long, youth soccer requires a field to be 60 to 75 metres wide by 94 to 120 metres long. To allow for two games to be played on a single field, ultimate requires a field to be 76 metres wide by 110 metres long for two games to occur simultaneously. The standard field size used by the Park Board can accommodate youth and adult soccer, field hockey, practice for rugby, and can be used for ultimate although it is a less than optimal size.

The Vancouver Field Sports Federation (VFSF) has proposed that the turf playfields at Jericho and Memorial South Parks be widened to 68 metres and lengthened to 105 to 110 metres to accommodate more user groups. Rugby groups have proposed that the field at Jericho be widened to 68 metres by 120 to 125 metres long to accommodate rugby matches.

In terms of participation, there are 12,000 to 15,000 soccer players in Vancouver, 4,000 ultimate players, 1,000-5,000 rugby players, and 1,000 to 1,500 field hockey players. Staff recognizes that rugby and ultimate would benefit from larger fields and examined the possibility of extending the size of the fields at Jericho and Memorial South Parks.

If the field were to be extended at Jericho Park to meet the dimensions requested by the VFSF, the field would have to be extended to the east by 5 meters and to the south by 4 metres, which would move the walking path beside the field further east. For the field to be the appropriate size for rugby matches, the field would have to be extended a further 15 metres in length. At Memorial South Park, the field could be extended to meet the size request put forward by the VFSF by extending the field to the west to increase width and to the north to increase length. Extending the width of the field will mean the field will be built closer to residents or to the children's playground.

Extending the two fields would also have cost implications. If the Park Board were to proceed with the field size it has used in the past (64 metres by 100 metres) the cost for both fields would total \$6,110,000. If both fields were to be extended to the size requested by the VFSF (68 metres by 105 metres) the incremental cost increase would be \$300,000, for a total cost of \$6,410,000. If the field at Jericho was to be further extended to meet rugby match requirements (68 metres by 120 metres), the incremental cost beyond the increase for the VFSF requirements would be \$200,000, for a total cost of \$6,610,000. The budget allotted for the upgrade of both fields is \$6 million, so constructing both fields to meet the Park Board standards already creates a budget challenge. To construct the fields to meet VFSF or rugby match standards is not feasible within the current budget.

Other risks that need to be considered are the possibility that bids for the project will come in higher than anticipated, increasing the cost of the project and forcing the Park Board to make trade offs in the project later on. In terms of field usage, it needs to be

determined whether the larger field size will be seen as the typical size to provide in the future, which will increase capital costs for future synthetic fields due to the size precedent set. Lastly, a larger field size will mean that fewer hours for field use would be allocated to soccer, although this group is the main target of the synthetic turf playfield program.

The typical 64 metre by 100 metre field size used by the Park Board serves a wide range of users. Staff believes that the incremental benefits generated by a larger field do not justify the increased costs and risks. However, the issue could be reviewed in greater detail as part of the update to the Playing Field Renewal Plan.

#### Discussion:

A Committee member asked staff whether alternative funding sources can be used to increase the budget of the project. Staff mentioned that funds can be re-assigned from other portfolios, although doing so would defer other projects.

A Committee member asked what would happen if bids for the project came in higher than expected. Staff replied the solution would entail examining what aspects of the project could be scaled back.

The Committee asked how the timeline of the project would be affected by increasing the field sizes. Staff noted that the time is an important factor to consider as tender requests for the Jericho Park project will be sent out next month and there is little time to look for outside sources of funding.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Committee:

- Craig Woods, President, Vancouver Field Sports Federation

The following is a summary of the comments provided by the foregoing delegations:

- The contingency fund for this project is large
- Was not aware the funding for the project was going to be tight
- Have heard the money left from the Point Grey and Van Tech synturf projects is going to be used for the Trillium project, although had been informed all funding for Trillium was already present
- Park Board should request proposals for both fields sizes
- There are adult groups in soccer that prefer fields larger than the Park Board standard
- Soccer does not require as much field time in the summer, whereas ultimate does
- There is demand for ultimate fields in Vancouver
- Touch football requires larger fields
- We can't predict future of sports so it is better to build larger fields now than retrofit existing fields later
- As soccer groups get preferred times, they will give up their non-preferred times but other user groups won't be able to use the left over times because of the small field sizes

- Accommodating one user group who uses fields for a portion of the year is not good long term planning

A Committee member asked staff whether the contingency fund allotted to the two fields is larger than usual. Staff noted the fund is based on a percentage of the total cost, given the perceived risks associated with these projects.

A Committee member asked for clarification on the Trillium project and whether extra money has been allotted towards its completion. Staff replied that when the initial funds for the synturf project were approved, it was considered sufficient to cover the cost of three fields. However, due to the extra costs associated with the synturf projects at Point Grey and Van Tech, this was not feasible so the left over funds from those projects were approved by the Board for the Trillium project.

A member of the Committee asked staff whether there would be a downside to the expansion of either field for certain user groups. Staff noted that in both cases, certain groups would be impacted negatively. In the case of Jericho Park, the natural area presents challenges for expansion, whereas at Memorial South Park, the expansion will bring the field close to neighbouring homes. Staff also noted that field users play on various sized fields and the rules regarding field size for various sports are not rigid.

A member of the Committee asked Mr. Woods whether he had had time to consult the VFSF Board regarding the proposed larger field sizes at Jericho and Memorial South Parks. Mr. Woods noted that although the VFSF Board had not formally met, he has communicated with the executive and synturf groups and they support larger fields.

A member of the Committee asked Mr. Woods whether he had access to alternative funding sources to aid in the expansion of the fields. Mr. Woods replied that he had asked Federation members about financial support for the project and had received mixed feedback with no solid commitments in place.

The Committee noted that in an ideal situation, funds would be available for expansion of both fields, but due to the economic realities and time constraints, expanding the fields at Jericho and Memorial South Parks is not feasible at this time. However, the Committee acknowledged that the needs of rugby and ultimate groups will have to be addressed in the future, and the possibility of constructing larger fields should be examined for the 2012-14 Capital Plan.

The Committee expressed appreciation for Mr. Woods' effort on behalf of field sport users to begin dialogue on larger fields and thanked staff for preparing a report on such short notice.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

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Meg Elliott  
Senior Business Analyst

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Commissioner Loretta Woodcock  
Chair