



**BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

JANUARY 12, 2017

A Special Park Board meeting was held on Thursday, January 12, 2017, at 7:05 pm, at the Park Board Office.

PRESENT: Commissioner John Coupar
Commissioner Casey Crawford
Commissioner Sarah Kirby Yung
Commissioner Stuart Mackinnon
Commissioner Erin Shum, Vice-Chair
Commissioner Michael Wiebe, Chair

ABSENT: Commissioner Catherine Evans

GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE: Malcolm Bromley, General Manager
Shawna Wilton, Deputy General Manager
Cheryl Chan, Manager, Executive Office & Board Relations
Jessica Kulchyski, Recorder
Carol Lee, Meeting Clerk

1. Warming Shelters at Community Centres

The Board agreed to waive the deadline for the registration of speakers due to the exceptional circumstances under which the meeting was called.

Chair Wiebe noted that there had been over 200 emails received so far in support of keeping the warming shelters in community centres open.

Commissioner Kirby-Yung introduced a motion and commented on the need to ensure safety in community centres. Commissioner Kirby-Yung responded to questions from the Board.

The Board heard from 22 speakers. Nineteen speakers expressed support for the continued operation of temporary warming centres in community centres and spoke in opposition to the motion. Two speakers noted the need to provide appropriate resources and planning to ensure safety at community centres if they are to be used as temporary warming centres. One speaker commented on the need to provide alternative shelter if the temporary warming centres are closed. The speakers responded to questions from the Board.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 9:32 pm and reconvened at 9:42 pm.

MOVED by Commissioner Kirby-Yung
SECONDED by Commissioner Coupar

WHEREAS:

1. The Vancouver Park Board has a mandate to provide recreational services and is responsible for provision of services at 24 community centres together with community centre association partners;
2. Community centres are valued facilities that deliver vital fitness, recreation and social programs for residents across the city in support of healthy and active lifestyles;
3. The Park Board is responsible for ensuring the safe enjoyment of community centres by residents including children of all ages, families and seniors;
4. On December 17, in response to a request from the City Manager and City of Vancouver community services staff, Park Board management agreed to open two temporary warming centers at Creekside and Britannia community centres as a temporary emergency measure, in response to unprecedented cold winter temperatures. Subsequently warming centre locations expanded to include Sunset, Kitsilano and West End community centres without approval of the Park Board;
5. Operation of the warming centres has resulted in incidents including an infant being exposed to a needle on a changing table at the Creekside Community Centre;
6. Parents and residents are increasingly concerned about drug paraphernalia that pose safety hazards for children and patrons, being found inside community centres that are being used as warming centres;
7. Provisions and equipment are not in place for the use and safe disposal of hypodermic needles and drug paraphernalia at community centres; and
8. Vancouver Park Board staff are recreation specialists. They are not equipped or trained to deal with vulnerable and homeless populations and related unique challenges.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation direct staff to suspend operations of the warming centre trial program in any and all community centres, buildings and facilities under the jurisdiction of the Vancouver Park Board effective immediately;
- B. THAT any future warming centre or shelter trial or program may not be initiated without approval of the Board; and
- C. THAT the Vancouver Park Board work with city partners to identify alternate strategies more suited to supporting the needs of homeless citizens during cold weather periods. Further, that any future programs receive sufficient funding and resources, and ensure staff are fully trained, equipped and supported to ensure their own and public safety.

Motion to Suspend Rules

MOVED by Commissioner Shum

SECONDED by Commissioner Mackinnon

THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation suspend the Park Board rules to allow the meeting to continue beyond 10:00pm.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The rules were suspended to allow Mr. Bromley to provide information on incident reports received from the Vancouver Police Department during the time the warming centres were in operation, the security plan put in place by staff for the temporary warming centres, and the anticipated timing for the provision of a briefing to the Board. Mr. Bromley, along with Donnie Rosa, Director of Recreation, Park Board, responded to questions from the Board. There was discussion regarding the involvement of the City in the deployment of the temporary warming centres at community centres and the communication to the Board of the decision to utilize community centres for warming centres.

Amendment to the Motion

MOVED by Commissioner Mackinnon

SECONDED by Commissioner Shum

THAT Items A and B be amended to:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation support the City of Vancouver's initiative of using city assets for warming centres as needed, and that where necessary, Park Board assets be used as well;
- B. THAT the General Manager be empowered to negotiate on behalf of the Board when and if these Park Board assets are necessary.

DEFEATED

(Commissioners Mackinnon, Shum and Wiebe voted in favour)

Amendment to the Motion

MOVED by Commissioner Kirby-Yung

SECONDED by Commissioner Wiebe

THAT Item A be withdrawn.

DEFEATED

(Commissioners Crawford, Coupar and Kirby-Yung voted in favour)

Commissioner Kirby-Yung requested the motion be separated into distinct propositions.

Question on Item A

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation direct staff to suspend operations of the warming centre trial program in any and all community centres, buildings and facilities under the jurisdiction of the Vancouver Park Board effective immediately.

DEFEATED UNANIMOUSLY

Question on Item B

- B. THAT any future warming centre or shelter trial or program may not be initiated without approval of the Board.

DEFEATED

(Commissioners Crawford, Coupar and Kirby-Yung voted in favour)

Question on Item C

- C. THAT the Vancouver Park Board work with city partners to identify alternate strategies more suited to supporting the needs of homeless citizens during cold weather periods. Further, that any future programs receive sufficient funding and resources, and ensure staff are fully trained, equipped and supported to ensure their own and public safety.

DEFEATED

(Commissioners Crawford, Coupar and Kirby-Yung voted in favour)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The Board adjourned at 11:02 pm.

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Malcolm Bromley
General Manager

Commissioner Michael Wiebe
Chair