



Safety Concerns Regarding Increased Crowds at 2019 420 Event at Sunset Beach

Excerpted from Minutes 2019-04-15

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

MOVED by Commissioner Coupar

WHEREAS:

1. The Vancouver Park Board has jurisdiction over Vancouver parks per the Vancouver Charter;
2. The Vancouver Sun reported that with the addition of a performance by legendary California hip-hop band Cypress Hill, record crowds are expected at Vancouver's 4/20 pot event being held at Sunset Beach on Saturday, April 20;
3. 4/20 event organizer Dana Larsen told Postmedia News that the band had been booked by 4/20's main sponsor -- Crop King Seeds -- to bring more people to the un-permitted event.
4. It is the first time in 4/20 Vancouver's history that the event has had a headline act with Cypress Hill's mainstream popularity; the band is very openly a pro-cannabis advocate and has sold over 20 million records since forming in the early 1990s; hits include Insane in the Brain", "I Wanna Get High", and "Hits from the Bong";
5. Backing his big-crowd claim, Larsen said the event was also on a Saturday this year and marked the 25th 4/20 event in Vancouver, and was the first mass pot event since October's legalization of cannabis;
6. According to the Weather Network, on April 20 in Vancouver it is forecast to be sunny, with no chance of rain and a high of 10°C;
7. On February 11, 2016, Commissioners were advised by the Park Board General Manager, Malcolm Bromley, that the City of Vancouver had, at that time, agreed to cover "all costs arising from this event, including any damage to the park;
8. On February 15, 2016, Park Board Chair Kirby-Yung wrote a letter to the Mayor expressing the Board's grave concerns;
9. On March 6, 2017, the Park Board passed a motion stating, that in the interest of upholding the Parks Control By-Laws, the Vancouver Park Board will not permit or approve future 420 and/or cannabis day events on any property that falls under Park Board jurisdiction;
10. On March 15, 2017, a letter signed by four Commissioners was sent to the Park Board GM as a follow-up to the March decision to ensure that Park Board staff will not be facilitating access to Sunset Beach by protestors; while it is fully expected that measures to support public safety will be put in place by the Vancouver Police and by Park Board staff as needed, it is expected that the Park Board team would not provide any other support, such as facilitating the set-up of staging, electronic equipment, and booths for the purpose of selling cannabis and related products;



11. On February 11, 2019, the Park Board passed a motion directing staff to:
 - a. explore options available to preclude the sale of cannabis and cannabis related products at the upcoming 2019 420 event, in consideration of the new legal framework now in place;
 - b. send a letter to Mayor Kennedy Stewart, Vancouver City Council, and the organizers of the 420 event to request a continuation of the exploration of alternate venues within the City of Vancouver in order to move this event to a more appropriate location that will not cause disruption to West End area residents, seawall users and Vancouver Aquatic Centre patrons, with the goal of having this event relocated by 2020; and
 - c. prioritize all possible means to minimize impacts on local residents in regard to air quality, noise and music levels, traffic disruption, and restricted access to the seawall.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT an urgent meeting be convened of senior staff of all relevant agencies (Vancouver Police, Vancouver Fire & Rescue Svcs, Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Ambulance Svc), including Park Rangers and any additional appropriate agencies to review safety issues around this expanded unpermitted commercial event;
- B. THAT Park Board staff immediately contact the 420 organizers to request a cancellation of the Cypress Hill performance in an effort to control crowd size and possible damage to Sunset Beach Park;

CARRIED

(Commissioner Mackinnon opposed to A, Commissioner Irwin opposed to B)

- C. THAT Park Board staff continue to not provide any support, such as facilitating the set-up of staging, electronic equipment, and booths for the purpose of providing entertainment or for the purpose of selling cannabis and related products.

LOST

(Commissioners Barker, Coupar, and Irwin in favour)

Note: This motion was submitted as urgent business as it relates to public health and safety.