

MINUTES OF MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
HELD IN THE PARK BOARD OFFICE
ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1996

PRESENT: Chair	- David Chesman
Vice-Chair	- Duncan Wilson
Commissioners	- Malcolm Ashford
	- Allan DeGenova
	- Alan Fetherstonhaugh
	- Donna Morgan
General Manager	- Vic Kondrosky
Director of Recreation	- Allan Argent
Director of Planning & Development	- Jim Lowden
Director of Environment & Operations	- Liane McKenna
Supervisor, Arboriculture	- Paul Montpellier
Manager, Public Affairs	- Terri Clark
Recording Secretary	- Barbara Stampfl

The Chair informed the Board that Commissioner Louis was absent as he was in Cuba on vacation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting of the Board held on Monday, February 05, 1996 were adopted as circulated.

RECREATION SERVICES

Proposed Community Gardens Policy

Board members received copies of a staff report dated February 8, 1996 recommending that either a community survey be conducted in the neighbourhood surrounding McSpadden and Robson Parks to determine the degree of support for a community garden on these parks; or, that the community surveys be delayed until after the Board has reviewed the proposed policy on March 25.

Moved by Commissioner Wilson,

THAT a community survey be conducted in the neighbourhood surrounding McSpadden and Robson Parks to determine the degree of support for community gardens on McSpadden and Robson Parks;
and,
THAT this be subject to a Board policy to be developed on March 25, 1996.

Delegations:

Mr. Gavin Ross, Chair of the Mount Pleasant Community Centre Parks

Committee, stated that they are happy to endorse the Robson Park garden proposal as it is a well planned, positive addition to the community and support for this proposal was received at a recent community meeting. He urged the Board to support the proposal with approval in principle subject to results of the community survey. With regard to the proposed garden policy he spoke on behalf of the Mount Pleasant Community Gardeners who are very grateful the Park Board made this space available. He mentioned that the first draft of the policy was received 1 1/2 years ago and nothing was heard further until ten days ago when they received this package. They can support most of the policy but Item (c) regarding the 2 year membership clause is unfair and should be deleted. This would be a backward step as there would be no continuity and incentive to do a good job on the plot when you know you will be losing it in two years. With regard to Item (d) they agree that anyone in the City should have the right to apply but it is important that priority be given to local people.

Commissioner Wilson noted that these items have been brought to the Committee's attention and the report to the Board on March 25th will include any comments received up to then.

Ms. Donna Lockhurst, Robson Park Garden Committee, outlined the benefits received by the neighbours and children by having these gardens near the school. This park is located in a community that would benefit greatly from a community project. It offers opportunity to share problems and ideas and is safer for the children from Florence Nightingale School on field trips by not having to cross busy streets to get to the gardens. She outlined the success of the cooking class in their Outreach program and stated that they are happy to endorse this proposal so that planting can begin in April.

Mr. Bernie Gaudet, Robson Park Garden Committee, clarified the process to put Robson Community gardens in Robson Park. After surveying other sites and speaking to other community members they determined that the area adjacent to Family Place in Robson Park was the appropriate site. This site won't interfere with activities that normally take place in the park and is in the best proximity of the residents as well as other facilities in the area. They have distributed pamphlets to local residents, schools and community centres and held a public meeting. All responses are supportive of this initiative. They are eager to start and are looking for an immediate endorsement so they can begin planting and organizing funding from organizations as well community resources for building sheds, fences, etc.

Councillor Nancy A. Chiavario, stated her support for a community garden in Mount Pleasant. She urged that the community survey begin immediately with the opportunity to come back to the Board to endorse it in principle for this first year while work is done on the policy which can be applied to the longer term. She pointed out that these gardeners have worked hard and a one month delay does mean a lot as they need this time to allow for preparation. She also has concerns with the policy and the issue of longevity is important. The Board could carry out an annual review if it had concerns. She also felt that the issue of allotment of gardens should be left to the discretion of the committee.

She requested that the Board approve in principle the Robson Park Community Garden so preparation of the land can begin.

Commissioner Morgan referred to the policy and the fact that there are other lands besides parkland that could be used for community gardens, such as other city owned lands. She requested assistance in getting this policy passed by City Council.

Councillor Chiavario agreed that the City has a great deal of property in the property endowment fund that could be used for a number of things including community gardens. She advised that the Board could obtain this information from the Real Estate Services Department at City Hall.

The Chair stated his concern with alienating public land for private use forever even though it is for a worthwhile use.

Councillor Chiavario agreed that this will increase as population density grows. She suggested that the terminology should not be giving over public land for private use but should say "specific use" which is not unlike golf courses and playing fields, etc. She added that the community garden committees will find ways to involve everyone in the community and this could also be included in the policy.

Mr. Herb Barbolet, co-founder and coordinator of FarmFolk/City Folk Society, which is a registered non-profit society concerned with food agriculture, environment and health. He stated that community gardens are an important component to reconnect people to the land, nature and sources of food. They help people become more aware of these issues. The Society's primary concern is food security and building community confidence. He addressed the point about alienation of public land for private use and felt this should be seen as use of the land as a commons. The Society supports and encourages the use of parks and other public City spaces for community gardens and supports the proposals for Robson and McSpadden Parks.

Ms. Barbara Crocker, community nutritionist for the Vancouver Health Department, outlined her involvement with the proposal for the Robson Park garden when she started working on a research program funded by the B.C. Health Research Foundation. This is a program on nutrition which involves the children, parents, school staff and the community. Last spring they had a plot in a garden far from the school which required crossing busy streets to get to it. To have a community garden only one block from the school is a great idea. She supports the Robson Park garden proposal and the revisions to the community garden policy as well as the possibility of having community gardens in other parts of the city.

Commissioner Wilson stated his support for a community garden at Robson Park but questioned why the school would not get involved by having a garden on school ground.

Ms. Crocker thought that having community gardens on school

property was an excellent idea that should be presented to the School Board.

Commissioner Chesman stated his concern that not every park can be all things to all people and that it may be of use to City Council if the City Health Department could advise them of these community needs.

Ms. Pat Gill, resident of Mount Pleasant, stated that community gardens are a rewarding process with everyone working towards a common goal. They foster community pride and personal responsibility for a safe and healthy neighbourhood. She stated that community gardens should be structured to meet the needs of those who live adjacent to them. Continuity is very important and the Board should consider this before instigating a two year time limit.

Ms. Joanne Hochu, Strathcona Community Gardeners Association, stated their interest in being involved in the process and their support for community gardens at Robson and McSpadden Parks. She referred to the second paragraph of the definition which makes it sound like just individuals want to have the property for themselves when, in fact, the majority of time is spent on developing the gardens for community benefit. She noted that it is more difficult to get a commitment from people if there is a 2 year time limit on use of the garden. She also felt that priority should be given to people in the surrounding neighbourhoods rather than encouraging people from other areas.

Mr. Rob Mills stated that alienation of the land should be addressed. He feels that sportsfields are alienated from him but that neighbourhood gardens do not alienate. These are organized by people in the neighbourhood and require planning and use of everyone's talents. All community members have pride in the gardens even if they don't garden in them. With regard to a two year time limit this would not allow for diversity in the garden. He also felt that there should not be a restriction to membership but priority should be given to the surrounding neighbours.

Mr. Geoff McBeth, member of Cottonwood Community Garden and President of the Strathcona Community Gardeners Association, spoke about two items of concern in the policy. He outlined the work done at Cottonwood which included the regeneration of land which takes time. He noted that people in that neighbourhood rely on these plots for food and also need the garden as this is often the only outdoor space where they have any sort of ownership. The two year turnover and city wide membership would damage the organizational strength of their garden. There is more involvement in the garden from those who live closest to it and for low income people who usually don't have a car it is not realistic for them to use a plot that is across the city.

Ms. Rachel Rosen, representative of the Environmental Youth Alliance, is involved with Strathcona and Cottonwood community gardens working on environmental issues. They are involved with creating wildlife habitat, land restoration and creating a youth garden at the community gardens. They are also concerned with points (c) and (d) in the proposed policy as the greatest benefit in working in the community

gardens is the long term contacts of the young people with the older people in the community. This important connection might be lost. This also applies if plots are open to all Vancouver residents. As well, the long term nature of this work and natural soil regeneration takes several years. She stressed that it is important for young people involved to come back year after year.

Mr. Peter Royce, Elizabeth Rogers Community Gardens, stated his support for a community garden at Robson Park as he appreciates the problems of bringing school children across busy streets to access a garden. He has a problem with membership being open to any resident of Vancouver because plots tend to get overgrown if they are not tended by nearby residents. He also feels that the two year limit would be a disaster as they are trying to encourage people to build connections with the gardens. He felt that this might result in gardeners putting their names on lists all through the City and result in administrative problems. He recommended that membership be open to all Vancouver residents but that priority be given to neighbouring residents.

An additional delegation (name not given) from McSpadden Park Community Garden project encouraged the Board to carry out the survey as soon as possible. The intent of the McSpadden Park community garden group is to involve the local elementary school and a senior citizens complex by having plots available for them and therefore would have concerns with the two year time limit proposed in the policy. They also want to do outreach with the community and conduct clinics at the community gardens.

Mr. Gavin Ross, Ms. Donna Lockhurst and Mr. Bernie Gaudet requested clarification about the process as well as the proposed use of the school grounds. They felt that if the community garden was on a school ground they would feel uncomfortable using it and it would only benefit the school children. Commissioner Wilson stated that a garden on school property would not be an alternate to a community garden but an addition.

The Chair clarified that the process would be to provide commentary to staff, staff will report back to the Board with ten days notice given to interested parties, and the policy will be dealt with at the March 25th meeting of the Board.

Commissioner Wilson withdrew his original motion and put forward the following motion:

Moved by Commissioner Wilson,

THAT the Board grant conditional approval for the commencement of community gardens at Robson and McSpadden Parks; and, THAT such approval may be withdrawn if the community survey demonstrates that the community is opposed to such gardens or that the gardens are contrary to the Board's community gardens policy expected March 25; and, THAT all arrangements are subject to the approval and satisfaction of the General Manager.

Commissioner Wilson stated that he fully supports community gardens but is concerned with the safety of the school children in that area. He felt that the Board should work with the School Board in relation to Florence Nightingale School in particular because of the need for a softer, more gentle playground area in that neighbourhood. With respect to Robson Park, a community garden would create a safer place for the local neighbourhood and would involve community participation.

Commissioner Morgan requested that the wording of the motion be more positive and be reworded with a proviso that the gardens be subject to the policy approved by the Board. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Commissioner Morgan expressed strong support for the McSpadden Park gardens. There has been good community effort, the site will enhance the park and it is adjacent to the school which does not have a lot of property. It is a good site in a community that needs it.

The motion, as amended, was put as follows:

THAT the Board grant conditional approval for the commencement of community gardens at Robson and McSpadden Parks; and,
THAT such approval may be withdrawn if the community survey demonstrates that the community is opposed to such gardens;
and,
THAT the gardens be subject to the community gardens policy approved by the Board; and,
THAT all arrangements are subject to the approval and satisfaction of the General Manager.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Commissioner Morgan agreed that items (c) and (d) in the proposed community gardens policy need to be changed and in addition felt that the Board should hear more submissions on the policy and needs a venue for more positive input.

Moved by Commissioner Morgan,

THAT a public meeting be held in the first part of March to consider the Community Gardens Policy.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Last Meeting's Notice of Motion

Street Trees

The following Notice of Motion was put forward by Commissioner Wilson at the February 05, 1996 meeting of the Board:

Moved by Commissioner Wilson,

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THAT the Board approve the following policy concerning all trees under its care:

Park Board staff will mark, by way of a ribbon or other suitably visible item, all mature trees designated for removal at least two weeks prior to their being cut down, and;

Signage indicating the removal of trees will be improved for enhanced readability of passers by, and;

That the foregoing shall not apply where a tree or trees present an immediate hazard or danger to the public.

Also, that staff report back to the Board concerning the viability of:

Planting new saplings along streets and in parks, in an alternating fashion, where mature trees may have to be removed in the foreseeable future;

Improving our care of existing mature trees to prolong their healthy lifespan.

Mr. Paul Montpellier, Supervisor, Arboriculture, gave a slide presentation on the diseased tree replacement program. He outlined the problems with street tree diseases and concerns regarding hazards of dead branches, etc.

Commissioner Morgan enquired about notices to the neighbours about tree replacements. Mr. Montpellier advised that people living on that street received notification as well they post signs for passers-by and feels that the signs need rewording to indicate the single trees that will be removed.

Commissioner Wilson enquired if there is a program to liaise with residents informing them that they can assist with care of boulevard trees by watering and mulching. Mr. Montpellier advised that staff would approach the residents and he pointed out that the important thing is watering. If residents want to keep these trees then they are informed of what they can do to help.

The Chair thought that the Board was not communicating too effectively and may need to do more public education. Commissioner DeGenova stated that staff have done a tremendous job on planting trees and trying to save diseased trees and should be commended.

Mr. Clive Justice, retired Landscape Architect and Park & Community Planner, appeared before the Board to commend and to offer suggestions for the preservation, understanding of tree and urban forest management and maintenance. He congratulated staff members for the noticeable improvement in appearance and quality of public streets and greenspaces. He noted that there is a need, however, for a more visible and specific

individual tree targeting and tagging system and that street trees that are to be removed should be individually labelled with a full explanation of the reasons for removal of the tree. There should also be publicity via the media on a regular basis along with a posting on the Internet. He outlined suggestions for better publicity via the media and the internet. He urged the Board to also support the City Council's upcoming private lands Tree Protection & Heritage Tree By-law.

Commissioner Wilson communicated to staff that the intention of the motion was not to suggest that wrong things are being done by staff. It comes down to a communication problem requiring more public awareness about the street tree program. He does not like hearing from the public that trees have been cut down that they think should not have been cut down and therefore there needs to be proper signage to solve this problem.

The Manager of Public Affairs outlined a communication program as a result of the Street Tree Management Plan. She informed the Board that the Information Assistant has worked with the Arboriculture section and put together a school kit entitled Street Trees & Me that is in all elementary schools as part of the curriculum. There is also Remnant Woodlands program involving schools and planting trees as well as an extensive Arbor Week Program. Staff have also put together a guide to flowering trees in Vancouver and are also taking more steps with prior notification as to when street trees are going to be removed.

The motion was put as follows:

Moved by Commissioner Wilson,

THAT the Board approve the following policy concerning all trees under its care:

Park Board staff will mark, by way of a ribbon or other suitably visible item, all mature trees designated for removal at least two weeks prior to their being cut down, and;

Signage indicating the removal of trees will be improved for enhanced readability of passers by, and;

That the foregoing shall not apply where a tree or trees present an immediate hazard or danger to the public.

Also, that staff report back to the Board concerning the viability of:

Planting new saplings along streets and in parks, in an alternating fashion, where mature trees may have to be removed in the foreseeable future;

Improving our care of existing mature trees to prolong their healthy lifespan.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Commissioner Fetherstonhaugh suggested that the Board pass a motion to support a by-law regarding trees on private property. The Board was informed that this by-law is being worked on and will be going to Council soon.

PLANNING/ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES/OPERATIONS

Statutory Right-of-Way Northwest Corner Pacific Boulevard and Cambie

Board members received copies of an Administrative Report to Council dated February 7, 1996 recommending that Council grant a statutory Right of Way to B.C. Hydro over a portion of Lot 109, False Creek, Plan 20128, for a hydro kiosk; and that Council authorize the Director of Legal Services to execute the Right-of-Way documents on behalf of the City.

Moved by Commissioner DeGenova,

THAT the Board supports Recommendations A & B as outlined in the Administrative Report to Council dated February 7, 1996.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

City Council Report - Rezoning: 500 Pacific Street (Beach Neighbourhood East)

Board members received copies of a staff report dated February 8, 1996 recommending that the Board approve those aspects of the attached Council Report dealing with the delivery of David Lam Park, Phase III and George Wainborn Park.

Moved by Commissioner DeGenova,

THAT the Board approve those aspects of the attached Council Report dealing with the delivery of David Lam Park, Phase III and George Wainborn Park.

- CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

RECREATION SERVICES

Pay Tennis Concession in Stanley Park

Board members received copies of a staff report dated February 7, 1996 recommending that the Board renew the contract to operate the Stanley Park pay tennis concession with Professional Tennis Services Ltd. for the 1996 season.

Moved by Commissioner Wilson,

THAT the Board renew the contract to operate the Stanley Park pay tennis concession with Professional Tennis Services Ltd.

for the 1996 season.

- CARRIED.

(Commissioner Morgan opposed).

LAST MEETING'S NOTICE OF MOTION

Conflict of Interest Policy

The following motion was put forward by Commissioner Morgan at the meeting of the Board held on February 05, 1996:

THAT the Board adopt a Conflict of Interest policy wherein Commissioners declaring conflicts on Board decisions do the same for committee decisions as well.

Commissioner Morgan outlined her reasons for this motion which came about after a planning committee meeting in which International Village was discussed. She subsequently learned that the Chair of the Planning Committee is also the real estate agent for this particular development. She sought legal advice and learned that under the Vancouver Charter the conflict guidelines do not specify Commissioners.

The General Manager advised that the Vancouver Charter has been amended in this regard and that the City's Solicitor should be contacted.

Commissioner Morgan stated that the planning committee is not formally constructed as there are no minutes kept, therefore she moved the motion to make it clear that if a conflict is to be declared on an issue at the Board, that it also be declared at Committee meeting regardless of how informal they are.

Commissioner Fetherstonhaugh stated that the committee meetings are informal meetings and the only time a Board member would be in conflict is if a decision is being made on the item, or if they were trying to influence a decision.

Commissioner Morgan added that committees are privy to confidential information that will set the Board's policy later on and if that item is on the agenda that person in conflict should excuse themselves from the discussion. She felt that the Board should have a clear policy on this and will check this out because the Charter only refers to Council committees.

The Chair stated that this raises a reminder to the Board of appropriate conduct in the possibility of conflict of interest. He felt that these guidelines are already in place and that if there is a conflict then this would apply to Board meetings, committee meetings and comments to the press, etc.

A VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION AND IT WAS DEFEATED.

(Commissioners Ashford, Chesman, DeGenova, Fetherstonhaugh and Wilson opposed).

NEW BUSINESS

The Chair, as Board liaison to the Vancouver Public Library, was informed that the main branch of the Vancouver Library has a copy of the Park Board's 100 Year book but that 12 branches do not have a copy. He requested that 12 copies of this book be delivered to the new Library Board's meeting on Wednesday, February 21st.

REMINDERS

Board members were reminded about the Tree Planting for Multi-Cultural Week on Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. and the public meeting at Nat Bailey Stadium, also on Wednesday, February 21st, regarding the Summer Concert Series.

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Approval of Warrants
Warrant #05 in the amount of \$236,504.42, Warrant #06 in the amount of \$298,353.33.

V. Kondrosky
General Manager

Commissioner David Chesman
Chair

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