

Date: July 17, 1996 (FOR BOARD ACTION
REFER TO MINUTES
DATED JULY 29/96)
SUBJECT - WEST POINT GREY PARK LITTLE LEAGUE PROPOSALS

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve the construction of a permanent batting cage in the NE corner of West Point Grey Park with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager (see Appendix A).

POLICIES

* The 1991 Playing Field Management Plan outlined the following criteria for the funding of field sport improvement projects:

- the Park Board will provide a basic level of service in regard to playing fields and facilities;
- user groups will be responsible for the provision of services which are beyond the basic level.

* Vancouver Park Board's Batting Cage Policy and Procedures (see Appendix B).

* A community consultation process be conducted for new structures in parks.

BACKGROUND

As a basic level of service, the Park Board provides ball diamonds (groomed infield and backstop) and playing fields. The provision of an outfield fence, a batting cage or a scoreboard building is considered beyond the Park Board's basic level of service. These facilities are not required to play a baseball game nor are they a little league requirement (a fence is required to host tournament play). However, eleven of the city's fourteen little leagues have scoreboard buildings and outfield fences around their "premier" diamond and nine little leagues have batting cages.

Currently, West Point Grey Little League temporarily erects a batting cage in West Point Grey Park and an outfield fence on the Jericho Hostel diamond during their season of play. For the past two years, the cage has been erected on the south field near the basketball court. During the off-season, the cage is stored adjacent to the southeast backstop. The outfield fence at the Jericho Hostel diamond is setup and taken down daily (when required).

In the spring of 1996 the West Point Grey Little League asked the Park Board for permission to undertake the following projects at West Point Grey Park:

- to temporarily erect an outfield fence around the south east diamond;
- permanently erect a batting cage on the north field;
- build a scorekeepers building behind the south east diamond.

DISCUSSION

The community consultation process for the proposal consisted of:

Information Pamphlets

Pamphlets were distributed to the neighbouring residents of West Point Grey Park (see Appendix C). Staff received five responses from residents: four were not in favour of both the outfield fence and scoreboard and two were for and two were against installing the batting cage on the lower field. Residents also noted that the West Point Grey Park functions as a public park and not just a sports park.

Other Community Groups

- West Point Grey Community Centre Association

The Community Association has discussed the proposal and has agreed to abide with the community consultation and Board decision making process. They are not objecting to the installation.

- West Point Grey Greenways Committee

A committee consisting of representatives from the Northwest Point Grey Homeowners' Association, West Point Grey Residents' Association and the West Point Grey Community Association have been working with the City's Greenways Project to establish a link on the Discovery Street right-of-way between West Eight and West Fourth Avenues. The proposed scoreboard and batting cage locations are on this right-of-way. Until the greenway plans are finalized, the Greenways Committee would prefer that no permanent structures be constructed on the Discovery Street right-of-way.

- West Point Grey Minor Soccer and Westside Minor Softball

Both organizations have been informed of Little League's proposal. Neither group expressed concerns regarding these proposals.

Summary

Proposal	Neighbourhood Concerns	Evaluation
Outfield Fence	-not required for baseball; -restricts other uses of the park; -unsightly structure.	-limited passive space available in park; -park is extensively used by community;

		-temporary installation limits visual impact.
Permanent Batting Cage	-eyesore/restricts views; -location on proposed greenway.	-lower field location would reduce visual impact; -locating along fence line reduces visual impact. -right-of-way location would require Engineering Dept.'s approval; -consideration would probably not be given until the greenway proposal is evaluated.
Scorebox Building	-not required for play; -storage available in fieldhouse; -loss of green space/ restricts views; -location on proposed greenway.	-right-of-way location would require Engineering Dept.'s approval; -consideration would probably not be given until the greenway proposal is evaluated.

CONCLUSION

In light of the community consultation process, West Point Grey Little League has decided to proceed with only installing a permanent batting cage on the north field. To accommodate the proposed greenway as well as lessen the structure's impact on the softball diamond, it is recommended that the cage be installed in the northeast corner along the north fence rather than the east fence.

Locating the cage in this location meets the Board's Batting Cage Policy - i.e., it will not eliminate existing active or passive park functions, dominate the park or compromise the park's aesthetic quality. The cage's visual impact will be lessened by the lower elevation of the north field as well as locating the cage along an existing north fenceline. Representatives from the Greenways Committee, minor soccer and softball support this location.

Since the provision of a batting cage is beyond the Park Board's basic level of service, the West Point Grey Little League will be responsible for the total cost of construction (including applicable permit and development fees) as well as all of the cage's ongoing operational costs.

Approving this request would be consistent with the Board's past practices with regard to little league ancillary facilities.

Prepared by:
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