

DATE: April 30, 1998

**SUBJECT: THE MANAGEMENT OF VOLLEYBALL ON VANCOUVER BEACHES**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- a) *THAT the Board receive the Management Plan for Beach Volleyball as information (See Appendix A).*
- b) *THAT the Board designate volleyball areas at Kitsilano (8 courts maximum), Locarno (6 courts at the Sailing Centre - 3 courts maximum at the picnic site), Spanish Banks East (8 courts) and West (8 courts) Beaches for the 1998 season of play (See Appendix B).*
- c) **THAT volleyball play be restricted to designated areas unless authorized (permitted) by the Board.**
- d) *THAT the Board review/evaluate the dedication of beach volleyball areas after this trial period.*

**BACKGROUND**

Volleyball has historically been accommodated on Vancouver's beaches. Play regularly occurs on beaches with permanent volleyball posts as well as on open beach areas with portable volleyball net systems.

In the spring of 1997, Park Board staff (Recreation, Lifeguards and Beach Maintenance) met with representatives of the BC Volleyball Association to discuss volleyball on Vancouver's beaches. The use of portable courts can be attributed to the fact that the demand for beach volleyball cannot be accommodated on the Board's 16 permanent courts. To ensure access, groups bring their own portable posts. Unfortunately, the use of portable volleyball courts causes:

**Maintenance Concerns:** the "leaving behind" of stakes and post supports in the sand has the potential to injure players as well as damage maintenance equipment (sand cleaning machine);

**Conflicts with Other Users:** the high demand for beach activities and the city's limited beach space has lead to conflict between

volleyball players and other beach goers; in addition beach volleyball can cause problems with dust.

Both of these problems have been getting worse due to the increased popularity of beach volleyball.

To address these concerns, staff proposed the installation of a 16 court sand based volleyball facility on the grass area to the west of Spanish Banks West in the summer of 1997. Upon completion of the initial community consultation process, the Park Board decided not to proceed with the facility at this location. Comments received during the consultation process included concerns regarding the loss of the green space, the appearance of the facility and lack of washrooms/transit/parking. It was also suggested that the facility would be better suited on an existing beach.

In the fall of 1997, the Park Board instructed staff "to work with the BC Volleyball Association and the other relevant stakeholders to develop a management plan for beach/sand court volleyball including possible expansion of permanent posts in dedicated areas, and to report back to the Board in the spring of 1998". A committee of Park board staff and representatives from the BC Volleyball Association met again and developed the accompanying "Management Plan for Beach Volleyball".

## **DISCUSSION**

Park Board staff are proposing that beach volleyball only be allowed on specific areas of the beach and that these designated areas be defined by the placement of logs. Staff are recommending that the designated volleyball areas accommodate the number of courts outlined in the accompanying chart. To reduce the "stake and post support" problem, staff are recommending the installation of additional permanent posts or designing a portable post anchoring system which does not require spikes in the sand at the designated sites. Unless permitted by the Board, portable net systems will not be allowed on Vancouver beaches.

In selecting the designated beach areas, consideration was given to:

- creating volleyball areas on existing beach areas which have historically been used for beach volleyball;
- expanding the designated areas for volleyball (supply) to meet the current level of activity historically provided with both

- the permanent and portable net systems (demand);
- designating areas for volleyball which would have the least impact on others' use of the beach;
- designing a volleyball net support system which would eliminate the need for placing spikes in the sand.

**Designated Beach Volleyball Areas for 1998**

<b>Beach or Park</b>	<b>Existing Courts</b>	<b>Proposed Courts</b>	<b>Comment</b>
English Bay	2	2	no change
Jericho Beach	2	2	no change
Kitsilano Beach	4	8	historically nets have been accommodated between permanent courts and the beach; beach access from the playground to increase as per agreement with neighbourhood.
Locarno Beach - Sailing Centre	0	6	proposed experimenting with "log tie-downs" instead of posts; currently accommodates small tournaments (four nets);
Locarno Beach - Picnic Site	0	3	could be booked with picnic site.
Spanish East Beach	1	8	historically has accommodates six to eight portable nets on a regular basis.
Spanish West Beach	4	8	historically has accommodated additional play.
Sunset Beach	1	1	no change
Third Beach	1	1	no change

Trout Lake	1	3	requires the creation of a sand pit area - more consultation required.
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Given the low cost of designating specific areas for beach volleyball and the flexibility to adjust the area based on demand or unforeseen concerns, staff are recommending that these proposals be implemented on a trial basis for the 1998 season of play.

In the longer term, staff recommend that the Board pursue the creation of sand pit volleyball courts as well as continue to investigate methods of reducing any dust problems associated with volleyball play.

### **Community Consultation**

The standard consultation process followed for a sport facility proposal involves informing park users, park neighbours and local community groups of the proposal and asking them for comments. Given the time of year, it was difficult to consult with or inform the summertime users of the beaches/parks regarding the beach volleyball proposal. For this reason, staff are proposing that any changes to management of beach volleyball be implemented on a trial basis for the 1998 season of play and that the proposed sites be signed accordingly. Consequently, the consultation process for beach volleyball will not be complete until September, 1998.

The initial consultation process focussed on the immediate neighbours of the proposed beaches volleyball areas - Kitsilano Point, NW Marine Drive and Belmont Ave. In addition, local community groups in these neighbourhoods were also informed of the proposal - Kitsilano Resident Association, North West Point Grey Home Owners' Association and the West Point Grey Community Association. The process consisted of distributing a "proposal" pamphlet (Appendix B) to the park neighbours and the community groups. Staff received seven responses from the consultation process (correspondence on file with secretary). Areas of concern include:

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
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<p>Beach volleyball vs. limited beach space</p>	<p>Staff have considered the advantages and disadvantages of constructing a sand volleyball facility vs. designating existing beach space to volleyball. In evaluating potential off-beach sites for volleyball, it became apparent that locating the facility adjacent to an existing beach area was most favourable as the sand surface of the courts would "blend in" with the existing beach landscape and that maintenance costs (sand cleaning) would be lower if located next to existing beach area.</p> <p>Finding an appropriate site or sites for a major off-beach volleyball facility is difficult as few parks could accommodate such a facility. Last summer, a proposal to construct a sand volleyball facility on a portion of the grass area next to Spanish Banks West was withdrawn upon completion of the initial community consultation process. Smaller facilities are possible. While these facilities would serve to better distribute play, the number of courts possible would not be sufficient to solve the demand related problems on the westside beaches.</p>
<p>Designating more of the beach for volleyball</p>	<p>The current staff proposal recommends creating volleyball areas on existing beach areas (supply) which have historically been used for beach volleyball (demand). Restricting play to designated areas should actually reduce the area of play for volleyball through more efficiently organizing/utilizing the beach. The current portable net system does not result in the most efficient use of space.</p>
<p>Conflicts between volleyball and others using the beach.</p>	<p>The high demand for beach activities and the city's limited beach space has lead to conflict between volleyball players and other beach goers. A portable volleyball net system can be erected on any 11m x 24m area of the beach. Restricting volleyball to specific areas vs. the current portable net system would serve to reduce the conflicts between users of the beach.</p>

Rewarding volleyball groups who cause maintenance problems (leaving spikes behind) with access to designated beach areas.	The majority of volleyball players do not leave behind spikes and post anchors from portable net systems in the sand. However, the limited spikes and anchors that are left behind have the potential to injure other players or users of the beach as well as damage maintenance equipment (sand cleaning machine). For this reason, staff are proposing the installation of additional permanent posts or designing a portable post anchoring system which does not require spikes in the sand. Volleyball will only be allowed outside the designated areas during special events or programs.
Appearance of permanent posts	Existing volleyball posts are eight foot - 6x6 inch wooden posts. Staff are working on designing an anchoring system which would use strategically placed logs to anchor portable posts. This system will be tried at Locarno Beach - next to the Jericho Sailing Centre.
Access to water from playground at Kitsilano Park	Park Committee concerned that the access way created last summer at Kitsilano Beach was not wide enough. Minor modifications to the volleyball area will result in an increased walk between the beach and the playground.
Dust from volleyball play	Silt and other fine particles cause the dust. Staff propose to experiment with converting a limited number of courts to a coarser sand to see if there is a reduction in the dust.

## CONCLUSION

Given the high demand for vs. the limited supply of beach space, it is recognized that there will be resistance to any change of use on Vancouver's beaches. Unfortunately in the case of beach volleyball, maintaining the status quo will not solve the issues identified in the review of the sport: conflicts between users of the beach, level of play accommodated, maintenance and safety concerns. The popularity of beach volleyball is such that it would be difficult to ban portable net systems without providing alternate sites to accommodate play. Staff believe that the best solution is to designate volleyball areas on beaches which have historically accommodated beach volleyball and limit play to these designated areas. Designating volleyball areas will also

result in the more efficient use of the city's limited beach space.

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