

**Minutes of Meeting  
Finance Committee, Vancouver Park Board  
2099 Beach Avenue, Vancouver**

**DATE OF MEETING:** March 15, 2004

**ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners**  
Commissioner Anita Romaniuk  
Commissioner Heather Deal  
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock  
Commissioner Lyndsay Poaps

**Park Board Staff**

Susan Mundick	General Manager
Lori MacKay	Director of Vancouver East District
Anita Ho	Director of Corporate Services
Cindy Mercer	Manager of Purchasing
Joyce Courtney	Manager of Communications
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

**Delegations**

Rick Archambault	Strathcona Community Centre Association
Donalda Greenwell-Baker	Strathcona Community Centre Association
Steve Bouchard	Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre Association

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m.

The Agenda was presented and approved as follows:

1. Ethical Purchasing
2. Delegation - Strathcona Park
3. Review of the Minutes of March 1, 2004
4. Fundraising
5. 2004 Operating Budget

**1. Ethical Purchasing:**

Cindy Mercer, Manager of Purchasing, outlined the Ethical Purchasing Action Plan. Although the Park Board does not have a formal ethical or environmental purchasing policy, current purchasing practices for some product areas include the request of specific information from contractors, information that may affect how contracts are awarded. Cindy provided examples of tender invitation forms for janitorial cleaning chemicals, paints and coatings, pest control, and paper towel and toilet paper, and put forward information about coffee, “green” chemical product, and clothing purchasing. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 227 Park Board vendors were sent a letter and a survey form requesting information on supplier purchasing practices, and there has been a 15% response rate in the first few days. Survey results will be tabulated by March 31<sup>st</sup>. Research into how other cities and organizations practice ethical purchasing will be also be completed by March 31<sup>st</sup>, and recommendations about future purchasing practices will follow May 1, 2004.

### Discussion:

- Basic policies around purchasing procedures are already in place, and working within the existing policy framework is central to the process of developing ethical purchasing procedures. Although policies do not differ much between the City and the Park Board, careful analysis of the pros and cons of changing existing policies will need to be done, with ongoing consultation between the Park Board and the City.
- Park Board purchasing staff work closely with the City purchasing department, sharing a service module, the same computer accounting program (SAP), and regular communication. Although the Park Board processes payments to vendors separately, consistency in use of the same system and increased purchasing power are achieved through joint contracts with the City. In addition, the City is kept informed of Park Board activity on Ethical Purchasing, and the City's timeline on this task is similar.
- Certain green products are being tested for effectiveness to try to remove some of the more dangerous products used in Park Board buildings. Testing is being done at one site in order to build a base of staff knowledge.
- Office paper purchasing is done through a joint contract with City. Although the contract contains wording with regard to recycled content, the current policy is lowest price. This is one policy that may be reviewed.
- Committee members thanked staff for the progress that has been made, and look forward to collaborating with their Council colleagues

### Action:

- Staff will provide samples of paper tenders for inclusion in the Ethical Purchasing information package.
- Staff will provide information on 'green product' test results.

## **2. Delegation - Strathcona Park:**

Rick Archambault from the Strathcona Community Centre Association presented an overview of recent community efforts to develop Strathcona Park, and provided the Committee with information about why Strathcona would benefit from the addition of park programming for children and youth. The delegation announced the official opening of Strathcona Park on July 11, 2004.

2001 census data on the area served by Strathcona Park indicate there are about 1500 children under age 6, 2000 between 6 - 14, and 1400 between ages 15-19. These are children living in low resource families, in a community characterized by high levels of poverty and low education. There is limited access to private greenspace, and pressure on public greenspace is increasing as the community becomes more densely populated. In terms of recreation, there is a lack of both children/youth programs and local participation in minor and adult league sports in the area. The delegation identified one benefit of running summer program in Strathcona Park as a potential deterrent to the establishment of summer squatter camps.

The Strathcona Community Centre Association requested from the Board the following:

- \$25,000 startup funding for equipment for ongoing, year-round programming at Strathcona Park
- \$40,000 Added Basic Funding for regular after school programming, a summer playground program, and special weekly community events

Representing the Ray-Cam Cooperative Association, Steve Bouchard requested from the Board:

- Approval for programming at Strathcona Park as part of Added Basic in 2004
- Park Board staff assistance to access program funding through DTES initiatives

Discussion:

- Lori MacKay gave an overview of the summer Playground program, which is a very basic Park Board service package that is typically enhanced by community partners according to local need. It is recognized as an important summer program in areas where access to formal, more structured programming is limited. Most Playground programs are in Vancouver East, and provide children with safe, fun alternatives to the street.
- Lori MacKay described Park Board efforts to request added basic funding for a summer Playground program in Strathcona Park. In submitting the request, staff were of the view that the change of use of the site, from its previous use as a city-wide sport facility to its new use as a community park provided the rationale for providing basic level community playground programming. The request for added basic was not approved by city staff since this was a new request and was not included in the original capital project approval as a financial consideration related to the project. Staff are aware of the need for additional summer programs in the Strathcona community and are reviewing all playground locations in the District to measure existing services against new priorities. This process may result in reallocating resources internally to fund a new Playground at Strathcona Park.
- Committee members were given a description of eligible programs under Added Basic. Added Basic provides for basic maintenance that has been triggered by approval on a capital plan. It adjusts the annual base budget to include the new operating costs, which are then incorporated into the following year's operations budget. Added Basic is not available to add new or expand existing services. Program services in parks have not traditionally been included with park development requests.
- The committee received information about what programs are currently funded by the Park Board. Park Board funded programs include aquatics, rinks, fitness centres, and golf. The Playground Program is the only in-park service funded by the Park Board. Other recreational programming is activated by community partners, who respond to local need with direct programming, funded through user fees and local fundraising.
- Park Board staff work closely with community groups to identify recreational needs and access funding, especially in neighbourhoods where there is less income for fundraising.
- Wendy Au will meet with the Board and staff at a staff briefing on April 26, 2004 for an update on DTES activities. There will be an opportunity to gather information about DTES initiatives that may have funding that can be applied to programming at Strathcona Park.

Actions:

- Park Board staff will meet with Strathcona Community Centre staff to discuss reallocation possibilities within the Strathcona neighbourhood.
- Vancouver East District staff will work with community groups in the Strathcona area to define program needs and research funding from other sources (e.g. non-profit organizations, other levels of government, philanthropic).
- A query about the impact of provincial downloading on localized Park Board services will be sent to community directors and coordinators when the best time for this inquiry has been determined.

### **3. Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes of the Finance Committee of March 1, 2004 were adopted as presented (moved by C. Deal, seconded by C. Woodcock, all in favour).

### **4. Fundraising:**

Joyce Courtney introduced a proposal for fundraising, and described the existing program, gave recommendations to help it reach its potential, and discussed how to finance an expansion.

The current program, "Gifts for Parks", provides an opportunity for individuals, businesses, and organizations to donate amenities to parks. It has raised over \$3M in gross revenues in 17 years. Activity levels in 2003 were average, with the donation of about 100 items. Joyce identified several limitations and issues associated with the current program, and described the following working group recommendations:

- increase product prices to come in line with other municipalities
- introduce a surcharge for location (ie feature parks)
- administer 10 year term to allow donor opportunity to return into the system

Plans for the future are based on piloting a one year contract for staff with a special skill set in development, fundraising, marketing, and donor cultivation. The first priority would be to enhance and expand the current program. Working from the review and the recommendations that have already been completed, staff will manage the identified set of improvements and streamline the program. They would also explore other opportunities that can be pursued directly and with community partners, including planned giving, special events and activities, grant writing, and establishing a foundation as a permanent maintenance fund for organization.

It is proposed that this work be financed in 2004 through the Park Amenity Reserve account, and be self-funding from 2005 onwards. Joyce commented that the current program compares strongly with other programs that were reviewed, earning consistent annual revenues.

#### Discussion:

- The Park Board has a unique opportunity to take advantage of the strength of the current program, enhance it, and use it as a way to finance expansion, rather than spending 7-10 years developing a foundation.
- Marketing to date has been donor-driven, with the series of plaques in City parks providing the best advertising. It would be advantageous to expand marketing activities, but this is currently limited by staff resources.
- The donation program has covered the capital costs of bench acquisition, and the City has covered some maintenance costs. But there is no margin of surplus in current pricing scales, and funds to maintain any additional benches must be raised by the Park Board. This will be built into price increases.
- There are several issues related to the 10 year term on bench donations. The Park Board agrees to maintain a donated bench for 10 years, after which time, disposition of the gift occurs at the discretion of the Park Board. Related issues include recovery of ongoing maintenance costs, rededication options, opportunities for new donors, wait lists, and equitable access to prime locations.
- It was stressed that this is not a memorial program, but a donation to local parks and

recreation. The donor does not own the bench or other gift item, and the word “memorial” is no longer used.

**5. 2004 Operating Budget:**

The Finance Committee closed the regular public session of the meeting at 8:30 pm.

In Camera Meeting:

Moved by Commissioner Deal,

That the Finance Committee go into a meeting which is closed to the public, pursuant to Section 165.2 of the Vancouver Charter, to discuss matters related to paragraph:

c) labour relations or employee negotiations.

Carried Unanimously

The In-Camera session adjourned at 10:30 pm.

**6. Next Meeting:**

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for May 31, 2004

The agenda will include:

- Review of March 31 Operating Statement
- Capital Budget Close Out
- Lease Renewals (Lawn Bowling Licence; Citywide Community Gardens Licence)
- Donations