

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

DATE OF MEETING: November 8, 2004

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners

Commissioner Anita Romaniuk, Committee Chair
Commissioner Heather Deal
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock (arrived 7:05 pm)
Commissioner Suzanne Anton
Commissioner Lyndsay Poaps (arrived 8:15 pm)

Park Board Staff

Susan Mundick	General Manager
Anita Ho	Director of Corporate Services
Lori MacKay	Director of Vancouver East District
Terry Walton	Manager of Recreation Services
Alison Dempsey	Business Services
Meg Elliott	Senior Business Analyst
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm. The Agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. Review of meeting minutes of September 27, 2004
2. 2005 Fees and Charges
3. September 2004 Operating Statements
4. Follow up of October 28 2004 Budget Open House
5. 2005 Operating Budget
6. Cummings Family Donation

1. Review of the Minutes of the September 27, 2004 Meeting:

The minutes of the Finance Committee of September 27, 2004 were adopted as presented (C. Deal moved, C. Romaniuk seconded, all in favour).

2. 2005 Fees and Charges:

This item was referred back to the Finance Committee from the regular Board meeting of November 1, 2004. Anita Ho presented a package that staff prepared in response to the questions that were raised at that time:

- Why did staff propose a 2.75% increase in fees and charges? Anita Ho referred to the global budget arrangement between the Park Board and the City of Vancouver that requires the adjustment of fees and charges to cover inflationary cost increases. The rate of inflation for 2005 is projected at 2.75% by City Finance staff. Susan Mundick told the Committee that Park Board staff are recommending an across the board increase of 2.75%, and that the alternatives are to either cut programs, or implement larger increases in some areas and smaller in others.
- What makes up Park Board revenues of \$31.2 million in 2004? Anita Ho presented a summary of Park Board revenues by program, and noted that at \$9.5 million, golf revenues represent about 1/3 of total 204 revenue projections. Staff emphasized that most revenue

areas will meet 2004 targets, with the exception of golf and parking. Staff provided a comparison between Vancouver fees and fee structures and those of the Cities of Richmond, Burnaby and Surrey. Compared to this market, Vancouver emphasizes simplicity and flexibility for users by offering the same rates for pool, rink, and fitness programs. Richmond, Burnaby, Surrey have variable fee structures, rates, and age groups.

- What types of initiatives are in place to address access to service?: Staff prepared a list of Park Board programs that help ensure that people have access to programs, and presented an analysis of recreational revenue and discount programs. The Leisure Access Card (LAC) and Loonie/Toonie programs are considered to be among the most progressive in Canada. The group discussed the challenges of tracking LAC usage, and staff told the Committee that it will be possible to capture LAC usage values with the new Safari data collection system.

Members of the Committee expressed concerns about raising fees for youth and asked staff to examine and report back on the overall impact of reducing youth fees and charges. The group discussed the size of the youth user group, barriers to youth participation other than fees, and whether a policy review is required to address the issue.

Recommendation:

The Finance Committee recommended that the Board approve the adjustment of the 2005 Fees and Charges as defined in the staff report dated November 9, 2004, and that staff review and report back on options to reduce youth fees and charges.

3. September 2004 Operating Statements:

Anita Ho reported to the Committee that after the nine month period ending September 30, 2004, overall revenues and expenses are within budget projections, and that staff are holding expenditures very tightly. However, revenues for the last quarter of 2004 need to reach \$6 million in order to meet the budget. Committee members were advised that record breaking poor weather in August and September had a negative impact on both golf and parking revenues even with recent fee increases, and that revenues earned during the last quarter of 2004 will depend significantly on the weather. The group discussed the challenges of managing a seasonally driven budget where 40% of the revenue budget is affected by variables that cannot be controlled, and possible implications if the budget is not met.

Conclusion:

Staff will continue to manage expenditures, maintain ongoing scrutiny of the budget, and report back to the Finance Committee monthly in order to ensure a timely response to any budget issues that arise.

4. Cummings Family Donation:

Susan Mundick told the Committee that the Cummings family of Wyoming recently made a \$25,000 donation to the Vancouver Park Board for a special amenity for Stanley Park in memory of their parents. Park Board staff worked with the family to develop a landscape plan that accommodated the arrangement of three benches, a table, patio and walkway approach near the Stanley Park Pitch and Putt Golf Course and the Ted and Mary Greig Rhododendron Garden. On October 26, 2004, while touring the donation site with Park Board staff, the visiting Cummings family decided to donate an additional \$50,000 for maintenance of the benches, a matching refuse container and for another (yet to be determined) special project in Stanley Park.

Committee members expressed their appreciation for the generosity of the Cummings family.

5. 2005 Operating Budget:

Anita Ho told the Committee that the Added Basic portion of the Park Board's 2005 Operating Budget is approximately \$900,000, and will be reviewed by the City in December. The group discussed how Park Board annual budget increases are higher than other City departments because of the current capital plan and its associated Added Basic approvals. Staff told the Committee that facilities and programs continue to expand, and that user fees are at or near saturation point. A member of the Committee would like the Board to advocate for greater support for parks and recreation services in Vancouver, and the Committee agreed to form a subgroup to review facts, set priorities and discuss strategies to improve municipal funding.

6. Ethical Purchasing:

Commissioner Poaps arrived at 8:15 pm, and asked the Chair if she could update the Committee on the development of the City of Vancouver Ethical Purchasing Policy. The group briefly discussed this process.

7. Follow up of October 28 2004 Budget Open House:

Anita Ho summarized the results of the Budget Open House "Dollars and Sense", held at Trout Lake Community Centre on October 28, 2004. The public was invited to discuss the services of the Board and the planning for the 2005 budget at an informal drop-in event featuring 26 display boards about Park Board programs, services and budget information. There were about 35-40 Vancouver residents in attendance, as well as Park Board Commissioners and staff.

It is a Board goal to include residents in the budget process, and public input was gathered with a feedback survey of attendees at the event and an online survey following the event. 35 surveys were completed in total, and responses provided very specific information about public awareness of Park Board programs and services, ideas about existing and new programs and services, and suggestions about how to fund them.

The Committee talked about the relative value of the benefits for the cost of the event (\$11,090), and explored ideas to increase public access to the boards, which were very well received. Survey respondents also noted that while the information on the boards was very accessible and useful, many wanted more information about the budget and would have appreciated detailed handouts.

Next Steps:

Survey results will be summarized and posted to the Feedback section of the Park Board's website.

8. Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm. The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2004 at 6:30 pm. Possible agenda items include:

- Review of November 30, 2004 Operating Statement