

Minutes of Meeting
Planning and Environment Committee, Vancouver Park Board
2099 Beach Avenue, Vancouver

DATE OF MEETING: May 4, 2004

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Eva Riccius
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Commissioner Suzanne Anton
Commissioner Heather Deal

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Lori MacKay	Director Vancouver East District
Ron Caswell	Manager of Operations, Vancouver East District
Bill Manning	Manager of Operations, Queen Elizabeth District
Kate Davis-Johnson	Manager Park Development
Philip Josephs	Manager of Revenue Services
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

Delegations

David Tracey	Strathcona Community Garden Association
Susan Kirbis	Strathcona Community Garden Association
Muggs Sigurgeirson	Strathcona Community Garden Association
Bob Sarti	Strathcona Community Garden Association
Penny Perry	Point Grey Natural Foreshore Society
Mel Lehan	West Kitsilano Residents Association
Mary Davison	Point Grey Natural Foreshore Society
Charles Steele	Ziptrek Ecotours
David Udow	Ziptrek Ecotours

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m, and the Agenda was presented as follows:

1. Strathcona Garden Pond Proposal
2. Tatlow Park - Delegation
3. Ziptrek Ecotours Proposal - Stanley Park
4. Approval of Minutes of Meeting March 2, 2004
5. Approval of Minutes of Meeting April 1, 2004

1. Strathcona Garden Pond Proposal:

Delegation:

David Tracey, Vice President of Strathcona Community Gardeners Society (SCGS), presented a proposal to improve the wild habitat area of Strathcona Community Garden. He explained that of the three sections of the garden that are in place to help the society meet its goals (allotment plots, communal area, and wild habitat area), the wild habitat area is working least effectively. The present pond is bordered by overgrown blackberry bushes and dries up each summer,

creating an environment that attracts illegal activities such as prostitution, drug use and camping. The proposed project aims to limit access for illegal use and make a more effective habitat zone by:

1. creating two permanent linked pools
2. building a boardwalk and view deck to regulate circulation, protect the ecosystem and offer interpretive visits
3. planting native plant species to increase biodiversity

The group wishes to proceed with pond construction this summer in order to assertively address the summer public nuisance factor. They want to drill a test well to determine on-site groundwater availability, and are willing to use tap water as required to keep the pond level topped up during the summer. All project costs, including design, construction and maintenance, will be paid by the SCGS. They are requesting a letter of approval for the project from the Park Board, for use in the Society's funding applications.

Discussion:

- Different options for supplying the ponds with water were discussed, including pumping from an aquifer (preferred), and use of stormwater and/or purchased City water if an aquifer is not found on site. The use of stormwater is associated with issues of storage, water quality, and limited availability in times of demand.
- Staff identified the need to consider water catchment strategies in a larger context. The community has requested that the City close and remove Hawks Street in order to combine Strathcona Park and the community gardens into one park. This would enlarge the available catchment area and create options for stormwater biofiltration systems.
- Park Board staff require that soil contamination testing at the proposed pond site be done to the maximum pool depth (2.5 m.) to determine what steps need to be taken to bring this project in compliance with provincial waste management regulations. Furthermore, it should be determined whether sealing would be required below the pond. The SCGS applied a modified Ministry of Environment contaminated soils test, with negative results for heavy metals.
- The SCGS hope to receive Park Board approval in time for inclusion with June project funding applications.

Action:

- A Memorandum of Understanding will be struck between the SCGS and the Park Board before soil and water testing are initiated. SCGS will provide staff with a description of project phases, objectives, costs and timelines.

2. Tatlow Park - Delegation:

Delegation:

Members of the Point Grey Natural Foreshore Society provided the Committee with information about community, City and Park Board efforts toward daylighting First Creek in Volunteer Park. Mel Lehan described how a vision of reclaiming Kitsilano creeks could be implemented starting with First Creek by filtering stormwater and diverting it back into First Creek, building holding ponds, and creating gravel spawning beds in Volunteer Park. Mary Davison noted the importance of a gradually sloped stream bed for fish access, and Penny Perry introduced the

recent “Tatlow Creek Stream Restoration Project Final Report” by City Engineer Aaron Grill to the Committee. The delegation requested that the First Creek daylighting project be considered for inclusion in the Park Board’s 2005-2008 capital budget.

Discussion:

- The delegates identified several benefits of daylighting First Creek in Volunteer Park, including: saving money by diverting stormwater from municipal treatment and reducing or eliminating the use of tap water in the creek in Tatlow Park; improving water quality and ecology in the two parks; and providing educational opportunities for the community.
- Use of stormwater in this stream may mean that the project will not yield viable, year-round fish habitat. Availability/quantity of groundwater is currently undocumented.
- The City Engineering report will provide staff with budget and technical details about the proposed project. The extent of background work already done on this project was noted by staff and the Committee.

Recommendation:

The Planning and Environment Committee recommends that the First Creek Daylighting Project be added to the project list for consideration in the 2005-2008 Capital Budget.

3. Ziptrek Ecotours Proposal - Stanley Park:

Delegation:

Charles Steele and David Udow presented Ziptrek Ecotours’ proposal to partner with the Vancouver Park Board to teach environmental sustainability through adventurous zipline tours and contemplative canopy walks in Stanley Park. They explained how their tours provide an easily accessible and fun way for urban dwellers to learn about environmental issues, and emphasized how their infrastructure and systems are low-impact and removable. Some of the benefits that the Park Board may realize through a partnership with Ziptrek were identified as: increased general revenue; job creation ; provision of interpretive environmental signage by the company; funding for research ; and that the company provides all costs. The delegation identified Prospect Point as a possible location because of the elevation and the forest/marine interface in that area.

The delegation requested that the Committee consider their proposal, provide feedback and advice, and, if the Committee is interested, support further discussions and planning.

Discussion:

- The Committee questioned whether this is an appropriate activity for Stanley Park, and expressed concerns about introducing an adventure activity into a quiet part of the park. The Committee also had reservations about bringing more commercial activity into Stanley Park.
- The delegation described how their business focuses on using a powerful environmental teaching tool to make a difference in how people see the natural world.
- The Committee asked questions about the size of the project’s footprint, and were informed that fenced areas are not necessary underneath the ziplines and canopy walkways, removable platforms are 12 x 16 ft. in size, and ziplines and walks are a maximum of 500 feet long.
- Staff outlined how project proposals are evaluated by measuring community acceptance, economic viability, operator experience, and environmental impact, and explained that all

projects are then subject to a tendering process.

Conclusion

The Committee described the upcoming waterfront park planning process to the delegation, and invited them to become involved and bring their proposal forward for consideration at that time.

4. Approval of March 2, 2004 Minutes:

The minutes of the March 2, 2004 meeting were adopted as presented.

5. Approval of April 1, 2004 Minutes:

Item 3, Stanley Park Curb Drops, Recommendation was amended to remove the phrase “to the full board”. The minutes of the April 1, 2004 meeting were adopted as amended.

6. Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm. The next Planning and Recreation Committee meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2004, at 7:00 pm.

The agenda will include:

1. Approval of Minutes of Meeting May 4, 2004
2. Fruit Trees Follow-up (Lori MacKay)
3. Gingerbread House Daycare (Lori MacKay)
4. Cell Phone Tower at Fraserview Golf Course (Lori MacKay)