

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

DATE OF MEETING: July 6, 2004

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Eva Riccius
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Commissioner Suzanne Anton
Commissioner Lyndsay Poaps

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Lori MacKay	Director Vancouver East District
Ron Caswell	Manager of Operations, Vancouver East District
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

Delegations

Geoff Eccott	Rogers Wireless
Linda Skibo	
Gavin Ross	Mt. Pleasant Neighbourhood Garden
Susan Kirbis	Strathcona Community Garden Association
Michelle Hoar	Strathcona Community Garden Association
Simon Cowell	Vancouver Falcons Athletic Club
Robert Haines	Lions Gate Road Runners
Art Perret	Vancouver Olympic Club
Steve Nobbs	The Run Inn
Graeme Fell	Vancouver Thunderbirds Track Club
James Sinclair	Lions Gate Road Runners
Carlos Gaspar	Lions Gate Road Runners

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m, and the Agenda was presented as follows:

1. Cell Phone Tower at Fraserview Golf Course
2. License Renewals - Community Gardens
3. Running Track
4. Approval of Minutes of Meeting May 4, 2004

1. Cell Phone Tower at Fraserview Golf Course:

Lori MacKay introduced a proposal from Rogers Wireless to install a cell phone tower at Fraserview Golf Course. Park Board staff have had preliminary discussions with the proponents, and results of a technical review are positive. Another tower is located on Park Board land at Nat Bailey Stadium. Staff feel this is a feasible proposal and asked the Committee if there was interest in proceeding.

Delegation:

Geoff Eccott described the requirements of cellular networks for antenna coverage and siting,

and explained that antennas must be taller than surrounding structures and trees. A tower at this location would provide coverage from Marine Drive to the north side of the golf course, and from Nanaimo Street to Champlain Crescent. The proposed site, chosen in consultation with Park Board staff, is on the right side of the lake beside the existing washroom building where there are good RF conditions and maintenance access. The tower would be a 45m monopole, with small antennas and a 1/2m microwave dish at the top, and a 6m x 6m compound around the base. There would be little or no impact on vegetation. The tower would be painted dark green, and would have a low impact aesthetically, visible from the top of Kerr Street, from west of the golf course, and more in winter and from a distance.

Benefits of this proposal include: improved cellular coverage in the area; the best location for the area from an RF engineering perspective; there is sufficient room on the golf course; this location requires a simpler process than going into the neighbourhood to locate a site; and monetary returns from a long term arrangement.

Discussion:

- Staff described the license agreement process to the Committee. The proponent implements a community consultation process. Following this, staff brings a report and recommendations to the Board. If the proposal is approved, staff negotiate a long term agreement with Rogers Wireless (20 years - one 5 year term, with three 5 year renewals), with monetary value attached to each term. The agreement then goes through the legal department.
- The Committee expressed concerns about tower visibility, and discussed tower colour, location, and navigation lights. Geoff Eccott explained that dark green paint seems to provide the best visual aesthetic, and that while Transport Canada determines the requirement for tower lights, it is unlikely that lights would be required at this tower installation. Staff advised the Committee that the most extreme views of the tower would be from the area around the 13th hole, and that towers are more visible from a distance because of their height. Golfers will be included in the consultation process. Evergreen mapping has been requested in order to project changing vegetative coverage as the forest matures. A Committee member requested that more comprehensive photo projections be provided.

Action:

The Committee requested that staff continue to develop the project with Rogers Wireless and initiate a community consultation process. Staff will return to the Board in the fall with a report and the results of the consultation.

2. License Renewals - Community Gardens:

Ron Caswell gave a report on the history of community gardens, an overview of the policy and licenses, and a description of current issues at Strathcona, Cottonwood, McSpadden, and Mt. Pleasant community gardens. Staff are recommending a common renewal date for community garden licenses, and that the Community Gardens Policy be amended to provide for longer term agreements due to unique and exceptional circumstances. The Committee was asked to discuss license renewals and the Mt. Pleasant community garden issue at this meeting.

A. Mt. Pleasant Community Garden:

Lori MacKay noted that it is not unusual for different sectors of the community to have different

responses to community gardens in public park space, and that license renewal time is a good opportunity to review different perspectives. A Committee member asked if the license agreement for Mt. Pleasant Community Garden was temporary or ongoing, and staff explained that it is a legitimate agreement that is eligible for renewal, and that the community garden is interested in continuing.

Delegation:

Gavin Ross told the Committee that there is strong support for the community garden at Mt. Pleasant from both gardeners and non-gardeners, and that benefits are not exclusive to gardeners. He expressed concern that there was a question about the legitimacy of the Mt. Pleasant Community Garden's license, and asked the Park Board to recognize the value and benefits of this community garden.

Linda Skibo described her concerns about the Mt. Pleasant Community Garden:

- lack of consultation with and endorsement from the greater community about the garden
- unaware that the garden had ongoing tenure
- maintenance of the garden is better but aesthetics have not improved; insufficient clean-up parties
- criminal / drug activity from obscured sight lines
- plots with locked fences

Discussion:

- The Committee learned that the community garden members communicate informally in this garden rather than at formal meetings, and that members are informed about their responsibilities through a community garden members manual.
- A Committee member noted that criminal activity in greenspaces is a problem in the whole City and is not limited to community gardens.
- The community gardens policy states that gardens cannot be gated, in order to protect community access to public space. When gardeners lock their plots to deter theft, the community receives a message that public space is now private, which can create conflict. The Committee requested that the community garden members be made aware of the policy requirements for community access.

Action:

The Committee requested that staff review the matter of the delegation's issue with the community garden at Mt. Pleasant Community Garden and prepare a memo describing the history from the perspective of the Park Board.

B. License Agreement Renewals:

Susan Kirbis and Michelle Hoar joined the Committee and the other delegations for discussion about license renewals and the community garden policy.

Discussion:

- A Committee member identified the need to establish a dispute mechanism for individual issues, and suggested that signs be used to tell the community where they can go if there is a problem or a concern.
- The policy states that community gardens "must adhere to maintenance standards set by the Board", but none have been set. The Committee discussed whether the Board has a role in

defining maintenance standards.

- Staff explained that under the existing policy, the Park Board reacts to requests but does not seek ways to create new community gardens. The Committee suggested that the policy be changed to give the Park Board a more proactive role in this area, particularly with regard to the Park Board's involvement with the City of Vancouver Food Policy Task Force.
- Community gardens are seeking longer terms than are presently allowed under the policy. In general, Park Board agreements are for a maximum of 5 years unless there are significant financial investments or commitments. The group discussed: that communities make different kinds of investments, and that there are different kinds of equity; the concern that long term community garden licenses limit the use of land when neighbourhoods change; that it is easier to get compliance with regular renewal if license conditions are not being met; and that the Board retains the right to cancel a community garden license. A Committee member noted that different stages of community gardens are not recognized in the current policy.
- The Committee discussed the idea of reviewing and revising the Community Garden Policy to address the different issues, and to allow the Park Board to become more proactive. The Park Board could facilitate in-depth consultation with groups before developing a new policy. Staff noted the need to complete interim license agreements while the policy is reviewed.

Action:

The Committee asked staff to extend existing community garden licenses on a short term basis, and to review the Community Gardens Policy.

3. Running Track:

Delegation:

Simon Cowell gave a presentation to the Committee on the condition of running tracks in Vancouver. There are currently 13 running tracks in the City, located at schools and recreation centres, and at Brockton Oval in Stanley Park. The tracks were built between 1955 and 1975 by the Park Board (4) and the Vancouver School Board (5), with an addition four shared by these organizations. The tracks are made from outdated technologies and have not been maintained. No tracks have been built or resurfaced in 25 years, and the existing tracks have deteriorated beyond their intended useful life. The tracks were described as unsafe, unappealing, and without washrooms. Most Vancouver runners travel outside the city to train. Track improvements will enhance safety (better lighting/visibility, easier to supervise); enable focused defined workouts; and are essential for competitive/disabled athletes.

Runners would like to have three tracks in Vancouver, with modern surfaces, lighting, and washrooms, and field facilities at the same location, with one track built to competition standards. The delegation identified an opportunity for track renewal at the high school at Point Grey during upcoming field upgrades. This location is favoured by user groups because it is accessible and has good parking. Advantages of this site include: lighting is already planned and drainage is a requirement, there are washrooms at the nearby rink, and there is strong community and business support for fundraising. The delegation estimates that the community can contribute about \$400,000 toward the costs of adding a running track to the field.

The delegation asked the Committee to:

- evaluate current tracks and report back before fall
- endorse the concept of the need for new facilities

- consider adding new track facilities to the next capital plan
- consider the merits of a Point Grey joint project when deciding synthetic turf field location

Discussion:

- The Committee expressed concern about the cost escalation implications of any delay in the artificial turf field renewal process, and said that the field renewal process could not be delayed for the development and implementation of a track renewal process.
- Staff explained that an 8-lane running track would cost about \$700,000, and would be a significant item in the capital plan. The Committee discussed the capital planning process, and staff advised that the Board will need to prioritize items for inclusion in the 2005 capital plan.
- The Committee discussed the opportunity to start a track renewal process for Vancouver at Point Grey. It was noted that track renewal could occur separately from the development of artificial turf, as long the design accommodates future track development. Available space may allow for only 6 tracks at this site.
- The delegation described the limits and barriers to involvement in the sport of running, and their experiences with training in Vancouver. The delegation told the Committee that the percentage of youth participating in sport has dropped significantly in Vancouver, largely because athletes must travel outside the city to train and compete.

Conclusion

The Committee advised the delegation to discuss opportunities for a running track at Point Grey with staff, and asked staff to add the request for running track inventory, needs assessment and renewal to the Board's Capital Plan project selection list.

4. Approval of May 4, 2004 Minutes:

The minutes of the May 4, 2004 meeting were adopted as presented.

5. Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm. The next Planning and Recreation Committee meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2004, at 7:00 pm.

Possible agenda items are:

1. Approval of Minutes of Meeting July 6, 2004
2. Artificial Field Sites
3. Water Conservation Update
4. Aquarium - Discovery Centre
5. Riley/Hillcrest Master Plan Update
6. Nelson Park Update