

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

DATE OF MEETING: September 23, 2004

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

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Kate Davis-Johnson	Manager of Park Development
Bob Trydal	Manager of Operations, Stanley District
Bob Hindley	Recreation Programmer, West End Community Centre
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

Delegations

Rowly Johnson	West End Citizens Action Network / Bute Street Neighbour Committee
Devorah Kahn	Your Local Farmers Market Society
Terry Lavender	Mole Hill Community Housing Society
David Gilmour	
Aaron Jasper	West End Residents Association
Allan Wong	Vancouver School Board
Paul Klym	
George Stephenson	
Roy Wares	Arbutus Ridge Concerned Citizens Group
Randy Brophy	Point Grey Soccer Association
David Robinson	Kerrisdale Soccer Association
Seona Johnson	Dunbar Soccer Association
Gregor Young	Point Grey Soccer Association
Karen Sager	
Sue Mashohn	
Karen Mealey	

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m, with the following Agenda:

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

1. Nelson Park Update:

Kate Davis-Johnson gave an overview of the concept plan for the redevelopment of Nelson Park. The project objective is to bring about a park improvement which will satisfy the majority of the park users in the neighbourhood. It was initiated in September 2003 by a request from the Lord Roberts School Annex Parents Advisory Council (PAC) that the Park Board create an overall upgrade for Nelson Park. The initial meeting held in November 2003 was followed by a brainstorming design workshop and seven monthly meetings up to June 2004 to design a multi-use space for diverse users. Partners in the process have included the Park Board, Vancouver School Board, Lord Roberts Annex PAC, City of Vancouver, Police, Molehill, Your Local Farmers Market Society, West End (and other) Residents Association, WECAN, and dog owners.

Three concepts were developed and Option 3 emerged as a preferred alternative. Program elements include: inviting entry plazas, a fenced dog area, relocated playground and school staff parking, a new skateboard park and basketball court, a farmers market (weekends), the fieldhouse, and a modified pedestrian circulation system. The concept plan displays spatial relationships between the programmable elements, and provides a platform for analysis and discussion.

Delegations:

Twelve people asked questions and made the following comments about the Nelson Park redevelopment process:

- Rowly Johnson's primary concern is the "dark" corner of the park at Bute and Nelson, and he suggested that an entry point and pedestrian traffic through this section would open it up and be a better design option than pavement.
- Devorah Kahn identified the challenges faced by the farmers market if it is not integrated into the park. She noted that the vendors act as a positive presence by being "eyes in the park" and calling in concerns to the police.
- Terry Lavender told the Committee that two raised crosswalks and an additional entrance across from pathway from Mole Hill laneway would improve safety for children at the daycares until Comox Street becomes a greenway.
- Mardel Greenough is pleased to have the park in the neighbourhood. She made several suggestions and told the Committee that it is more beneficial to use the fieldhouse as a community hall than a station for the bike patrol.
- David Gilmour feels that park and park spaces are for all people, not for parking, and asked for management of time limits on park activities.
- Aaron Jasper would like to see the Downtown Transportation Plan be followed so that Comox Street is a greenway closed to traffic, and made several suggestions about the design.
- George Stephenson was disappointed with the schematic and commented that the project will not be successful until the Bute/Nelson corner is opened up.

Other comments included:

- appreciation was expressed to the Park Board, all the park partners, and the farmers market
- late night park users impact residents in high density residential low rises (x2)
- use soft membrane surfaces and porous parking lot surfaces for environmental and noise reasons
- park space is too limited to house the Police bike patrol in the fieldhouse (x3)
- do not place a parking lot exit onto Bute Street, which is one of the most heavily used

pedestrian streets in the West End (x2)

- use natural barriers rather than chainlink for fencing the dog area (x2)
- lighting now is discrete and where needed, replicate it throughout the park
- skateboarding is no asset in the park
- bring police presence into park through fieldhouse
- prefer no parking in play area, need more traffic calming
- playground corner provides shade and shelter from rain
- like barriers to keep dogs from kids

Discussion:

- A member of the public asked about the relationship between the Vancouver School Board (VSB) and the Park Board, and asked why the Park Board was planning on school property. Staff explained that there are two separate properties in the block, that the project was initiated by the school PAC, and that because it is a very densely developed area, there are advantages to both organizations and the community to take a cooperative approach and create something that is of benefit to everyone. It was noted that there is a history of cooperation between these organizations in other projects.
- A parent commented that the playground is the only safe place in the park and questioned the value of opening it up to the rest of the park where children are exposed to risk. School Trustee Allan Wong explained that the VSB has met with the school staff and PAC about the issue and that discussions are continuing. Staff answered questions about issues related to security and access, including the placement of the playground, fences, and the school parking lot. Trustee Wong noted that the location of staff parking is a safety issue that is currently under discussion at the VSB.
- A member of the Committee commented that by fixing the park and making it more attractive, more people will use it in healthy ways and discourage some of the activities that cause concern. Staff said that the goal to make it a better, healthier and more active space will be met by bringing good elements into the park and with crime prevention through environmental design.
- The Committee, staff and members of the public discussed the reasons for and the impacts of including skateboard and basketball features in the park. There is a perception that there will be an associated increase noise and drug problems. Staff advised the Committee that an earlier skateboard element was removed in the 1980's because it was wooden and difficult to maintain and proved injurious to some users. A member of the Committee commented that the demographics of the area show there are a lot of young teens, and it was noted that the proposed style of skateboard park is simple, well-used, and working well in other locations.
- Long time resident David Gilmour asked staff when the monkey tree that was removed two years ago will be replaced, and was advised that another monkey tree will be replanted as part of the redevelopment process.

Next Steps:

The project will continue to be guided and directed as a team, and will proceed to a wider forum with neighbourhood meetings and open houses following the receipt of more input. A plan will be developed in consultation with the initial group, staff will redraw plans for approval by the Board and School Trustees. Information about the project is available on the Park Board website (vancouverparks.ca), and people are encouraged to communicate with Park Board and VSB staff.

2. Artificial Field Sites:

Mark Vulliamy gave the Committee an update on the artificial turf field site feasibility review, a city wide process that identified five sites and proposed site specific public processes. Staff are now prepared to report back to the Board, and are suggesting that two sites be selected at this time, based on an east/west division. The Committee received a summary of estimated relative costs for Churchill, VanTech, Point Grey School, Prince of Wales School, and Killarney Community Centre, and a review of how each site meets certain selection criteria. The cheapest sites are Churchill (\$1,430,000) and VanTech (\$1,461,000), and the most expensive site is Killarney (\$2,741,000) due to extremely poor soil conditions. There is strong local support at each location, but there is also strong local opposition to the selection of the Prince of Wales site.

Killarney will be dropped from further consideration due to the expense associated with poor soil conditions. VanTech, Churchill and Point Grey are now candidate sites.

Delegations:

Roy Wares summarized residents' concerns about the selection of the Prince of Wales site and the consultation process. He described the proposed site as a shallow basin that collects water in winter due to subsurface conditions, and identified potential cost escalations on operating and maintenance budgets. Residents are also concerned that the impact of lighting and noise will be amplified by the topography.

Randy Brophy spoke on behalf of the Community Soccer Artificial Synthetic Turf Subcommittee and requested that the \$2.9 million reserved from the current capital plan for the installation of artificial turf fields be utilized in the following manner: one artificial turf field on the east side at Van Tech; and one artificial turf field on the west side at Point Grey. He identified youth soccer on the Westside as the largest user group in Vancouver, with most players located around the Point Grey site. He listed advantages of this site (including community contributions of up to \$400,000), and asked that fields be placed in communities where soccer players are.

Discussion:

- A delegate asked whether a regional recreational plan defines a strategy for fields and a member of the Committee explained that there is a playing field plan that sets out goals to increase field capacity, maintain grass fields, light gravel fields and create synthetic fields.
- The group discussed the Point Grey site. There is currently a good grass field that would be displaced, but there are no public permits on it at this time and it is unusable after November. A delegate commented that this area has the most players and the fewest fields.
- Staff explained that the current process will identify up to two sites with longer range planning for four more. Focusing on school board sites to maximize usage, 20 locations were selected from an initial 60, resulting in the current shortlist of Van Tech, Churchill, Point Grey as three reasonably good sites for consideration. For the next phase, staff will go back and review the initial list for potential synthetic field opportunities.

Next Steps:

Staff will present formal reports to the Park Board and the Vancouver School Board through October in a coordinated timeline. The public process will be designed and implemented for each selected site, permitting steps will be identified, and construction timed for spring/summer 2005.

3. Riley / Hillcrest - Master Plan Update:

Mark Vulliamy gave a review of the Riley/Hillcrest Master Plan Update process. Staff held park stakeholder sessions in May, and developed six options in schematic format. Four options assume no change in the Nat Bailey Stadium, and two options include a modified stadium. There is no proposal at this stage to remove the stadium. Option A2 places the Millenium Sports Facility, the Legacy Facility and the Aquatic Centre along Clancy Loranger Way. This design option has received general acceptance from the community association, the Olympic committee, the neighbourhood, and park stakeholders.

Discussion:

- The Committee asked staff when construction could start, and was advised that the Board is obligated to finalize a decision no later than July 2005 and that construction could begin in late 2006 or early 2007.
- Piet Rutgers described two issues raised by the Vancouver Organizing Committee that may affect the project timeline. The International Curling Federation has asked the Park Board to explore the implications of going from 6000 to 8000 seats on building design, construction and operating costs, and post-Olympic usage. In addition, the Curling Club has submitted a request for additional space in the legacy mode from 36,000 sq ft to 42,000 sq ft for a "Curling Hall of Excellence", along with other design and operational considerations.
- Staff explained to the Committee that Percy Norman Pool, the oldest pool in Vancouver, is currently leaking and is listed in the Aquatic Plan as in most urgent need for replacement.
- A member of the Committee asked staff about the effect of new construction on the timeline of the stadium upgrade. Staff advised that there would be no impact if construction is alongside, but there are issues of risk and aesthetics to consider if new construction links to the stadium.
- Staff told the Committee that the plan estimates an aggregate post-Olympic parking load of 1000 stalls.
- The group discussed the option of closing Ontario Street to traffic and connecting the parks. Residents have expressed concern about where traffic will go if it is taken off Ontario Street.

Next Steps:

Staff advised the Committee that it will take 4-5 weeks to finalize plan dimensions and prepare overlays before reporting back to the Board and holding an open house.

4. Water Conservation Update

Piet Rutgers explained that staff approached the development of a long term water conservation strategy by first looking at what is actually used in the system. The biggest uses are for:

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| 1. ornamental lakes | 37.6% |
| 2. irrigation | 27.5% |
| 3. metered and billed | 17.2% |
| 4. fountains | 14.7% |

Staff are looking at potential conservation options, such as cooling rinks with re-circulated rather than flowthrough water, irrigation conservation through horticultural management and utilizing graywater, and putting timers on fountains and using recirculation systems.

Next Steps:

Next steps include continued analysis (including cost/benefit), preparation of recommendations, and reporting back to the Board in early 2005. A member of the Committee requested that the

report include an evaluation of cisterns - where they are, how they are working, and where to place new ones.

5. Approval of July 6, 2004 Minutes:

The minutes of the July 6, 2004 meeting were adopted as presented.

6. Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm. The next Planning and Recreation Committee meeting is scheduled for October 5, 2004, at 7:00 pm.

Agenda items include:

1. Approval of Minutes of Meeting September 23, 2004
2. Everett Crowley Master Plan
3. Ultimate / French School Proposal - Oak and 37th
4. 8th and Fraser Parksite Naming
5. Fruit Trees (tentative)
6. Capital Planning Process