



Date: June 28, 2005

TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - Oppenheimer Park

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board receive this report for information.

POLICY

The Vancouver Charter, Part XXIII outlines that the Park Board has the exclusive possession of, and exclusive jurisdiction and control of areas designated as permanent public parks including uses, fees, rental charges, improvements, buildings, activities, admittance fees, closures and, under section 489(r), “Recreational Programs: organizing and conducting, and contracting with others to organize and conduct, recreational programs of all kinds, either in parks or in such other locations as may be approved by the Board or any of its employees designated for this purpose, and for fixing and collecting fees for such programs”.

The Parks Control By-Law provides for the control, regulation, protection and government of parks and places within the jurisdiction of the Board and of Persons who may be therein including Recreational Facilities.

BACKGROUND

Oppenheimer Park is a small (0.97) hectare) neighbourhood park in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES). The park has played an important role in the history of Vancouver from its earliest days. Today, it caters primarily to the DTES population, serving as a recreational and social centre for the community. Facilities in the park include softball grounds, basketball court, children’s playground and a field house operated by the Carnegie Community Centre and used to provide inclusive programming.

The City of Vancouver, Carnegie Centre, operates a year round program in the park which supports the large numbers of adult park visitors, including a hard-to-reach transient population and people dealing with significant health, social and drug related issues.

Recent increases in the demands and complexity of issues related to the operation of Oppenheimer Park has focused attention on ways that both the Park Board and the Carnegie Centre can work together to increase effectiveness and coordination of effort. One of the results has been the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Park Board and the City of Vancouver, Carnegie Centre regarding the use and operation of Oppenheimer Park. This was discussed at the Culture and Recreation Committee on June 15th, 2005.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each organization and reconfirm the commitment to work together on the delivery of important services in this community.

As the basis of this agreement, it is understood that Oppenheimer Park falls under the jurisdiction of the Park Board and, thus, is governed by Park Board policy, guidelines and mandate. It is also understood that the primary, but not exclusive, responsibility for community programming at the park rests with Carnegie Centre. In general terms, the Board is responsible for maintaining the grounds, field house building, public washrooms and park permits. Carnegie Centre provides staff on a year-round basis and delivers community based recreation, social, cultural and educational programs for all ages across the spectrum of local residents, most of whom are economically disadvantaged, including seniors, youth, Aboriginals, adults, local families with children and marginalized, addicted individuals.

The agreement will be reviewed on a regular basis and no later than five years from the date of signing.

The agreement covers a number of key issues:

- Priorities of Use
- Community Involvement
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Program Development and Supervision of Program Services
- Occupational Health and Safety Requirements
- Service Planning
- Communications
- Facility Maintenance – Operating
- Facility Improvements – Capital
- Specific facilities including the fieldhouse and playground
- Special Events
- Operation Committee

An important element of the agreement is the integration of the Oppenheimer Park Committee (a committee of the Carnegie Centre Board) as a Park Board ParkPartner

organization. This Committee provides advice on Oppenheimer Park to Carnegie Centre staff and will be encouraged to also provide advice to the Park Board.

SUMMARY

A memorandum of understanding between the Board and Carnegie Centre confirms that the operation of Oppenheimer Park is conducted through a partnership approach with shared goals, clear guidelines and expectations for the provision of services to the community.

Prepared by:
Vancouver East District
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC