

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

DATE OF MEETING: April 12, 2005

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Commissioner Suzanne Anton
Commissioner Heather Deal
Commissioner Allan De Genova
Commissioner Anita Romaniuk

Park Board Staff

Susan Mundick	General Manager
Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Liane McKenna	Director of Queen Elizabeth District
Jim Lowden	Director of Stanley District
Mark Vulliamy	Manager of Operations, Vancouver East District
Rudy Roelofsen	Manager of Facility Development
Janice Lowe	Planning Analyst
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

Delegations

Don Larson	
Jeff Malmgren	Vancouver Ultimate League
Doug Hibbin	Conseil Scholaire Francophone
Terry Slack	Resident
Philip Moses	Resident
Louise Longridge	Resident
Geoff Catliff	Westside Soccer and Vancouver Community Baseball
Delany Dunn	Vancouver Canadians Baseball Team
Ray Carter	Friends of Nat Bailey Stadium
Dave Mumford	Resident
Stan Jang	Riley Park Community Association
Allan Buium	Riley Park Community Association
Oliver Matters	Resident
Evan Sahmet	Resident
Donna Brown	Resident
Steve Calderhead	Resident
Art Bomke	Resident
Carol Bomke	Resident
Gail Uthoff	Vancouver Aquatics Group
Eric Dagenais	Resident
Mhairi Campbell	Resident
Kathy Cheng	Resident
Henry Edmonds	Resident
Steve Gustavson	Little Mountain Baseball
Ted Pawlik	Resident; Little Mountain Baseball
Shelley Davies	Resident

John McColloch	Resident
Surinder Parmar	Resident
John Nightingale	Vancouver Aquarium
Patrick O'Callaghan	Vancouver Aquarium
Clint Wright	Vancouver Aquarium

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm, with the following Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of March 1, 2005 meeting
2. Update on Options for Oak and 37th Park Site
3. Hillcrest / Riley Master Plan
4. Update on Aquarium Plans
5. Coopers Park

1. Approval of March 1, 2005 Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of the March 1, 2005 meeting were approved as presented.

2. Update on Options for Oak and 37th Park Site:

In the absence of Alan Duncan, Janice Lowe presented an update on the development of the park site at Oak Street and 37th Avenue, including an overview of the public consultation process and a review of the three concept options. Although survey results are not fully tabulated and will not be scientific, staff provided a preliminary analysis of survey responses and other public feedback showing that sport users prefer Options 2 or 3, and neighbours and current park users prefer Option 1. Mark Vuliamy highlighted the commitment to shared usage in the park, and the importance of identifying and balancing a range of diverse needs, including walking, biking, park amenities, natural areas, wildlife and bird habitat, and sports fields. For information about the three options, please refer to <http://vancouver.ca/parks/info/planning/37thandoak/index.htm>.

Delegations:

1. Don Larson told the Committee that he was concerned about the lack of notification for the meeting and said the process was unfair because of lobbying by sport users. He said that the area has been a passive park for 44 years and provides critical habitat for birds which would be destroyed by Options 2 and 3. He urged the Committee to listen to local residents first, and choose Option 1 which provides the best protection for existing wildlife bird habitat.
2. Jeff Malmgren reviewed the history of the site selection process that the Vancouver Ultimate League has followed, and told the Committee that the group wants to be part of a multi-use site. He said that the growth of the Ultimate program is limited only by playing space, that it is a sport that fits into a natural site, and that issues of traffic and parking are reduced as most members ride bikes.
3. Doug Hibbins reviewed the history of the Conseil Scolaire Francophone's (CSF) school development on a site at 37th Avenue and Willow Street, and reaffirmed their interest in partnering with the Vancouver Park Board in park development at 37th and Oak. He gave the Committee a letter from Renee Popov, Chair of the CSF, stating that Options 2 and 3 have considerable merit and that they are interested in arranging use of sports fields during school hours as well as partnering in the development of any of the three options.

4. Terry Slack told the Committee that his ability to prepare a presentation had been compromised by insufficient meeting notification, and brought regrets from June Ryder of the Natural History Society. He reminded the Committee that the park site is part of an important birdway between Queen Elizabeth Park and VanDusen Gardens and home to rare bird species. He highlighted the importance of protecting native shrubs, alder and cottonwood trees, and mature cedars for bird habitat, and noted the presence of wetlands associated with the headwaters of Mackie Creek and their significance to First Nations history. He asked the Committee to consider other uses for the park including community gardens, heritage events, First Nations programs, and seniors events.

Discussion:

- The Committee received delegations from the community who stated there was insufficient notice of the April 12th Planning and Environment Committee meeting provided to key stakeholders, and the Committee asked staff for more information about the process of notification for this meeting. Staff reviewed the public consultation process for the April 6th Open House, and will provide information to the Board about the notification process for the April 12th committee meeting.
- The Committee inquired about the location of bird habitat in the park. A delegation said that surveys done by June Ryder show that 95% of bird habitat is on along Willow Street, and noted that a 100' buffer is required along 37th Avenue, as well as the protection of evergreens on Oak Street.
- A member of the Board asked about the addition of a third Ultimate field and Jeff Malmgren told the Committee that a third field would not alleviate their need because they play switchovers with double headers.
- The group discussed the natural features of the site, including groundwater and the mature cedars and their importance to First Nations, wildlife and birds.
- Staff advised the Committee that based on an interpretation of the information received from the public process, a recommendation to approve Option 1 or a variation thereof would be brought to the Board on April 25, 2005. A member of the Committee asked that the Committee recommend that staff continue to investigate whether and how two separate ultimate fields could be placed on the site, and come back with discussion on both Option 1 and Option 2.

Next Steps:

Staff will provide information to the Board about the notification process for the April 12th Planning and Environment Committee meeting.

The Committee asked staff to continue to investigate whether and how two separate ultimate fields could be placed on the site, and bring a report discussing both Option 1 and Option 2 to the Board on April 25, 2005. There was no motion to approve this recommendation.

3. Riley/Hillcrest Master Plan:

Mark Vulliamy reviewed the draft Riley/Hillcrest Master Plan that was presented at an Open House on March 12, 2005, and summarized the responses that have been gathered. He described how the draft plan develops a central campus of facilities on Nat Bailey Park and returns Riley Park to a neighbourhood park character (when Riley Park Community Centre is moved into the Curling Facility after the 2010 Olympics). He also noted that the parking and traffic flow study has not been completed.

A broad range of interests were represented by the 212 attendees at the March 12, 2005 Open House, and while sports users were generally positive in their comments, many who live in the area expressed specific concerns about the draft plan: facilities (scale, height and number of buildings, pool location, impacts of lights, noise, pollution); traffic (impact on Ontario Street and bikeway, transit service to site); and parking (not enough, reliance on street parking). Staff have received an alternate plan from the community, and are considering significant alterations to the draft plan in response to the community's request for changes. A set of guiding principles for plan re-development was presented to the group to assist with the process of moving toward consensus.

Delegations:

1. **Philip Moses** thanked the Commissioners and staff for their dedication and said he is concerned about the combination of super-sized facilities so close to residences in a family neighbourhood. He told the Committee that there are many children under the age of 12 whose safety will be jeopardized by the increased traffic, and asked the Board to consider alternatives to the current proposal.
2. **Louise Longridge** asked the Committee to take enough time to plan carefully for buildings that will be operated for 60-70 years, and presented an alternate proposal from the community that switches the new Aquatic Centre with the existing Little Mountain baseball diamond. She outlined several advantages to moving the Aquatic Centre against the one disadvantage to Little Mountain Baseball.
3. **Geoff Catliff** represented a delegation from Westside Senior Soccer Society and Vancouver Community Baseball, primary field users at Hillcrest Park. He spoke about the emotional connection of baseball and soccer to this site as a living legacy, and expressed concerns about reductions in field sizes and field shading from new buildings. He asked that a 60 x 90' indoor training facility be allocated in the plan to provide winter space for youth baseball and soccer.
4. **Ray Carter** said he is supportive of the draft plan and is pleased that Nat Bailey Stadium remains. He expressed concerns about fragmented parking.
5. **Delany Dunn** spoke about the impact of the draft plan on the Vancouver Canadians Baseball team, specifically: maintaining and expanding centralized parking; loss of parking lot revenues; managing parking during construction; and directing traffic flow away from Ontario Street.
6. **Dave Mumford** pointed out how parking issues associated with 750,000 pool users/year will impact this single residential, family oriented neighbourhood, especially on Ontario Street. He asked the Committee to move the large facilities toward Midlothian Avenue.
7. **Stan Jang** told the Committee that the goal of the Riley Park Community Centre Association is to attain the best facility for the neighbourhood, and defined their requirements as: retain look and sense of community; integrate the new pool and community centre; and mitigate the effects of increased traffic and parking in the neighbourhood. He summarized how the current plan fails to meet their requirements, and strongly recommended relocating facilities and moving all parking to Midlothian Avenue. He asked for another round of public process and that local residents be included as stakeholders.

8. **Allan Buium** asked the Board to consider the increased pollution from placing a very large development in a very small footprint and the social costs of residents coping with city-wide facilities located in a family neighbourhood. He said that VANOC must consider the impact of their legacy on the community.
9. **Oliver Mattes** said that he supports the idea of moving the Aquatic Centre to the site of Little Mountain Baseball because his biggest concern is how a large volume of traffic will be managed if the current draft plan is implemented.
10. **Evan Sahmet** represented a number of residents and spoke in support of the alternate plan proposed by the community. He commented that this is not the same plan that was before the public one year ago, and said that traffic should be directed away from Ontario Street to protect children in the community. He urged the Board to move the Aquatic Centre as proposed.
11. **Donna Brown** invited the Committee to visit the quiet family neighbourhood that she lives in to see why it is worth protecting. She said there is no other neighbourhood in Vancouver with this concentration of destination facilities, and asked the Park Board to protect her community's green spaces and to keep the streets safe for families. She also suggested that the parking lots be controlled by the Park Board rather than managed commercially.
12. **Steve Calderhead** said that the plan needs careful traffic mitigation, and suggested that the Aquatic Centre be located in the dog off leash area and kept to the size of the current Percy Norman pool.
13. **Art Bomke** supported the neighbourhood statement about traffic and observed that there was no option without Nat Bailey Stadium. He asked the Board to work on behalf of the community to minimize the impact of adding three city-wide facilities to a neighbourhood park.
14. **Carol Bomke** noted that the current plan is different from what was presented at last year's Open House, asked about parking for the Millenium Sports Facility, and commented that Nat Bailey Stadium requires a complete rebuild and not just a new roof.
15. **Gayle Uthoff** represented Vancouver aquatic groups and supported the community's proposal and concerns.
16. **Eric Dagenais** asked the Board to alter the plan to address the impact of two issues: a serious increase in traffic from a projection of 750,000 visits/year to the Aquatic Centre, calculated to be an estimated 1100 cars/day through a neighbourhood with a lot of young children; and the lack of parking provided at destination facilities.
17. **Mhairi Campbell** said she was impressed with the residents' response and their alternate plan, and asked the Board to think very carefully about how to plan for enormous buildings that will cost a lot of money to erect and that will be here for a long time. She noted that the six plans that were on the internet one year ago are not what appeared at the Open House in March.
18. **Kathy Cheng** requested that the Aquatic Centre be moved to Midlothian Avenue away from Ontario Street and the greenway and bike route.
19. **Henry Edmonds** made several suggestions: move the Aquatic Centre into Queen Elizabeth Park to take traffic away and open up parking; ensure all large buildings have Midlothian or Clancy address; no vehicle access on Ontario south of 30th Avenue; if not underground parking, put buildings on stilts and park underneath.
20. **Ted Pawlik** said he is opposed to switching Little Mountain Baseball with the Aquatic Centre because: the Little Mountain facility was built by volunteers with no outside funding; it has the best view in North America; generations have played there and memory is important; and most importantly, it would cost taxpayers about \$.5 million to move the Little Mountain facility.
21. **Steve Gustavson** said that Little Mountain Baseball (LMB) is very concerned about the new proposal and that they require close consultation and more time to respond. He said that moving the location of the LMB diamond will create other problems, including traffic and noise implications, disruption of their program, sun issues on the new site, and inadequate space.

LMB has been on the site for 55 years, providing a program of community-based baseball that has grown by 67% in the last four years.

22. **Shelley Davies** spoke about quality of life in the neighbourhood currently and in the future, and the reality of living with construction. She said that game traffic now parks on the bikeway, and pointed out that an element of caring is not present with destination traffic. She noted that the residents have to live with the decisions that are made about the project, and asked the Board to think about how to make the neighbourhood safe.

23. **John McColloch** said that safety is the core issue and asked the Board to listen to the advice given by the residents and make it a safe community.

24. **Surinder Parmar** expressed concerns about linking building heights to the roofline of Nat Bailey Stadium, which is at least six stories high, and the impact of three very large buildings so close together. He asked the Board to take more time to look at the plan and to listen to the community.

The Committee thanked the delegations for their care and patience, and asked staff about the Park Board's legal obligation with regard to the development of Olympic facilities. Piet Rutgers told the Committee that the Park Board must determine the location of the Olympic venue by July 31, 2005.

Next Steps:

Staff will continue to work with other City departments and TransLink on transit, fire and emergency access, and will complete the traffic and parking study. The item will be deferred from the April 25, 2005 Board meeting while another option is developed in collaboration with the community.

4. Update on Aquarium Plans:

John Nightingale gave the Committee an update on the redevelopment of the Discovery Education Centre at the Vancouver Aquarium. He told the Committee that the Wild Coast and Arctic Canada displays will be significantly renovated and rebuilt, the mammal tanks will be reconstructed, and an indoor concourse will be created between Wild Coast and Arctic Ocean to open access to the outdoor landscape. The public viewing area will be expanded and redesigned, food services will be moved to increase valuable visitor and display space, and human and animal systems will be replaced or upgraded to improve efficiencies.

Patrick O'Callaghan described how the new plan addresses the Aquarium's educational programming needs by creating new classroom and other spaces for making connections. A news dissemination service in collaboration with content partners will provide galleries with a constant stream of conservation and education news. He said their goal is to create low-key exhibits that allow proximity and interaction between humans and animals. By making animal holding and caring facilities part of public displays and maintaining a natural character, they hope that people will experience an emotional engagement and a change in perception.

John Nightingale asked the Committee for their thoughts and concerns about the concept and the process, and requested suggestions on how to improve the overall revitalization of the facility.

Discussion:

- The Committee said the areas of concern for the Board include: the facility's footprint and any expansion into park space; significant changes to the interior; and changes in the public viewing experience from outside.
- Staff raised the issue that the proposed redevelopment expands into park space that now lies between the Wild Coast and Arctic Canada exhibits, and the group discussed the potential impact on outside views and loss of park space.
- The Committee suggested different ways for the public to provide input to the conceptual development of the project and the delegation said that new ideas are welcome at this phase of the planning.
- Commissioner Deal requested that the Aquarium respond to outstanding requests from previous updates (provide a list of all papers produced by the Aquarium, and provide lighting on the trail to the bus stop).
- The Committee asked for information about how the mammal breeding program at the Aquarium fits into its conservation goals and suggested that the Aquarium educate the public about this aspect of their operations. The delegation said breeding for captivity provides sustainable alternatives to taking animals from the wild, and makes them producers rather than consumers of wildlife.

The delegation explained that in order to be open before the 2010 Olympics, the project must begin by 2007. They will formally approach the Board with a request for approval for a development permit in 2006, and continue to provide updates through the Planning and Environment Committee.

5. Coopers Park:

Jim Lowden informed the Committee that Concord Pacific has asked to take back a portion of lawn at Coopers Park for use as a marshalling area for construction on their adjacent property. He explained that in other situations, park development has been delayed until the completion of construction, and this is the first time developers have asked to take back park land. There are trees along the inside edge of the sidewalk that are newly established and would not tolerate being moved. In response to signage at the area, 38 responses were received and 36 were not in favour of releasing a portion of the lawn for construction. Staff suggested several options and recommended that the Park Board release the sidewalk to Concord Pacific for their use in return for enhanced park amenities.

The Committee discussed various options and agreed that staff could negotiate with the developers about temporary use of the sidewalk area at Coopers Park.

6. Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 am. The next Planning and Recreation Committee meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2005, at 7:00 pm. Possible agenda items include:

- Mount Pleasant Pool Update
- Stanley Park Dogs Consultation
- Stanley Park Ecology Centre Interpretive Centre Vision
- Tree Contest