

Minutes of Meeting
Planning Committee, Vancouver Park Board

DATE OF MEETING: May 16, 2006

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners

Commissioner Korina Houghton, Chair
Commissioner Allan De Genova
Commissioner Spencer Herbert
Commissioner Ian Robertson
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Commissioner Marty Zlotnik

Park Board Staff

Susan Mundick	General Manager
Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Jim Lowden	Director of Stanley District
Liane McKenna	Director of Queen Elizabeth District
Michel Desrochers	Research Planner
Barbara Joughin	Committee Secretary

Delegations

Dr. John Nightingale	Vancouver Aquarium
Clive Grout	
Andrew MacKey	
Eleanor Hadley	
Elizabeth Wilkinson	Vancouver Childrens' Safety Association
Megan Carvell Davis	
Randy Puder	
Ron Clarke	
Fred Henderson	

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm, with the following Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of May 2, 2006 Meeting
2. Presentation – Vancouver Aquarium
3. Dog Task Force – Terms of Reference
4. John Hendry (Trout Lake) Park Master Plan
5. Sport Hosting Policy for Vancouver

1. Approval of Minutes of May 2, 2006 meeting

The minutes of the May 2, 2006 meeting were approved as presented.

2. Presentation – Vancouver Aquarium

Dr. John Nightingale presented the Committee with a concept for revitalization of the Vancouver Aquarium (the Aquarium), and introduced Clive Grout, architect, and Andrew Mackey, a public process consultant. In the context of the Aquarium's 50th anniversary, this expansion project focuses on renewal of the BC Wild Coast and Arctic Canada galleries, and provides an opportunity for an extensive, formal conversation with the community.

Clive Grout described the Stanley Park and Aquarium planning principles that are guiding their approach, and outlined the planning processes that have occurred to date and the proposed concept for expansion. The total proposed expansion area is 3420 square meters, a surface area increase of 28.7% over the existing lease area. The Aquarium has projected completion of their revitalization project by 2009. The key planning elements encompass the Aquarium's upper and lower levels and its outside areas, and include the following activities:

- Expand existing Arctic Canada pool into the current public viewing area
- Rebuild existing BC Wild Coast in its current location
- Add new dolphin complex with beaver display to the south
- Create a new entrance and public plaza to the east
- Build new washrooms
- Reconfigure path and add public plaza to the southwest, with viewing of the salmon hatchery
- Relocate loading and supply area

Andrew MacKey presented information about the community consultation program that is proposed to gather public feedback on the Aquarium's 50 year vision and their plans for physical revitalization. He outlined the consultation program's objectives, methods and topics, and asked the Committee for their suggestions and comments. Methods that could provide diverse opportunities for participation include small group meetings and public forums, open houses and displays, and use of the internet and an independent public attitude survey. Consultation topics considered to date include:

- Support for the revitalization proposal
- Design objectives
- Sustainability programs
- Social programs
- Transportation and parking

John Nightingale summarized the benefits of the physical infrastructure changes they are proposing as better homes for their animals, a fun and educational experience for Vancouver residents and tourists, an expanded research program, and a long-term legacy that showcases BC and Arctic marine life.

Delegation

Eleanor Hadley is concerned about the expansion of the Aquarium and that the Chair of the Park Board is an employee of the Aquarium. She asked how much of Stanley Park would be taken up with the proposed expansion, how the expansion area would be used, and how much the proposed expansion would cost the Park Board. The presenters replied that the proposed expansion was for an additional 3420 square meters for expanded living space for animals and that it would be at no cost to the Board.

Discussion

- A Commissioner asked if attendance is projected to change as a result of the expansion and the presenters explained that it is currently limited by parking and the road system in July and August and not by the size of the Aquarium. As a means of easing traffic, a suggestion was made about introducing central parking with a shuttle to the site, and this will be included as a question in the public consultation.
- A Commissioner inquired about compensation for loss of concession revenues during

construction and staff confirmed that there would be full compensation. It was noted that food services will be reviewed when the Aquarium's license comes up for renewal.

- A member of the Committee asked the presenters to provide details on the expansion's impact on adjacent trees. They highlighted that trees are an important value, that there are four major trees to preserve, and that planning will proceed in collaboration with Park Board staff to determine which trees will be preserved, moved or removed.
- The expansion plans include changing the salmon stream to make the hatchery and interpretation about its processes more accessible to the public.
- A member of the Committee asked how many more animals the Aquarium is planning to add and the presenters said bigger pools are needed for the animals they currently have as well as to provide room for an increase in animals through reproduction. In addition, there may be more animals as they would like to add a beaver area. The presenters noted that standards for animal containment change and they want to be responsive to any changes.
- A Commissioner requested information about how much of the proposed expansion is currently asphalt plaza compared to shrubbery, and inquired whether the proposed design includes plans to replace shrubbery that is removed. The presenter responded that about 60% of the proposed expansion area is currently asphalt and that it is critical to retain the plaza edges as mature green areas.
- Regarding past reactions to proposed expansions of the Aquarium, a member of the Committee asked if any consideration has been given to relocation elsewhere in Vancouver or to the development of satellite facilities. Although the Aquarium has reviewed other locations, they have a mandate to not abandon their existing investment because the current site already has infrastructure in place and is a very desirable location.
- The group discussed the need for a neutral consultation process and a member of the Committee suggested that small focus groups of members of the general public be included. Another member noted that the results of the public consultation process will form the basis for finalizing the expansion design and approach and proposed that the Aquarium work closely with Park Board staff to develop the process. The presenter said the intention is to have an open and balanced consultation and to work with Park Board staff in the development of the consultation process and its tools.
- Staff noted that previous Boards have passed resolutions related to the Aquarium, and the Committee discussed the situation and how best to proceed. Commissioners who were not members of the Committee noted that they were present as observers without voting privileges.

Next Steps

The Planning Committee referred formal debate on existing motions concerning the Vancouver Aquarium to the Board. Technical and public consultation processes are to be referred back to the Planning Committee for review.

3. Dog Task Force – Terms of Reference

On March 6, 2006, the Board passed a motion to create a Dog Strategy Task Force (the Task Force) to develop a Strategy on Dogs in the Urban Environment to improve conditions for accommodating dogs within Vancouver in a way that balances the needs and interests of dog-owning and non-dog-owning residents. At the April 18, 2006 Planning Committee meeting, the Committee requested staff to prepare a draft structure and membership for the Task Force and terms of reference for activities, timeline, budget, process, and approaches for public consultation.

Liane McKenna presented draft Terms of Reference for the Task Force and requested comment and feedback from the Committee. The Task Force will be responsible for formulating a Strategy for Dogs in the Urban Environment (urban dog strategy) that would include recommendations related to education of dog owners, enforcement, the infrastructure necessary for accommodating dogs, overall management of the issues, and other matters as identified by the Task Force. Key outcomes of the urban dog strategy have been identified as:

- a balanced compromise between restraint and freedom for dogs;
- a happy parks and leisure experience for all;
- sharing of public spaces within specific practices, rules and regulations;
- fair representation of all views;
- identification of cost factors; and
- identification of realistic and cost-effective solutions.

Staff listed several proposed Task Force activities including the development of a range of opportunities for people to express their views, such as public forums for testimonial evidence and comment on draft recommendations. The citizen-based Task Force will work with the support of Park Board, City and School Board staff, and will report to the Vancouver Park Board. A \$40,000 budget has been allocated for advertising, consulting, travel, research, public meetings, and administration. About \$30,000 remains from a previous allocation for enhancements to the dog off leash program and will be reallocated to the Task Force. Staff propose a timeline of approximately ten months, starting in June 2006, to establish the Task Force, review, research, consult and test, and to report back to the Board with options and recommendations by April 2007.

Delegations

- Elizabeth Wilkinson requested that the Task Force mandate specifically address compliance with City rules and suggested that it would be more effective to address behavior change rather than education because the biggest problem is bullying and threatening behaviors. She said it is important to bring in psychological and law enforcement experts to explore the deeper issues of why people react with violence and do not respect the law and other people's needs and views. She noted a bias toward expansion in the language of the draft Terms of Reference, and recommended that the Task Force go back and review what has been done and what is and is not working. Her view is that the Park Board should take direct responsibility for enforcement of dog laws in Vancouver parks and find ways to fund it.
- Megan Carvell-Davis observed that people are bearing a dog crisis in parks, and there is a need to change attitudes about what is responsible dog ownership. She recommended that the process start with a review of the histories of parks and the dog off leash program, and offered to make her files available to the Task Force.
- Randy Puder spoke on behalf of Celena Benndorf and said that dogs have no place in busy

public spaces and noted that it is a people issue rather than a dog issue. He does not want dollars and resources to be squandered on more process when action and good enforcement are needed to change dog owners' current attitudes of entitlement and their violent behavior.

- A member of the public said she was impressed by the level of discussion at the meeting which has given her more information about the situation than have media reports.

Discussion

- A Commissioner inquired about budgeting for the implementation of Task Force recommendations in terms of the City's budget timeline and how to avoid compromising due process, and staff explained that it is desirable to allow people to come together to explore solutions and any budget priorities that arise could be prioritized for funding.
- A member of the Committee commented that pressure will increase as the issues get bigger, and enforcement is a key component. He requested that the Terms of Reference include research into and use of other studies and other municipalities' programs and experience.
- A Commissioner noted that families are most active in parks in the summer and expressed concern about the timing of public forums. The Task Force needs to convey to dog owners that there are a lot of people in the larger community concerned about the issue of dogs in parks. She said the Park Board's inability to raise funds for enforcement impedes the ability to educate and have more dog off leash parks.
- A delegation suggested evaluating the past three years for information about numbers of tickets issued and whether numbers of dog licenses have increased, and staff said the data is available and will be provided to the Task Force along with information about best practices from other municipalities.
- The group discussed the need to ensure that people without specific interests and positions in the matter are reached during the public process, and staff said they will support the Task Force in developing appropriate community outreach.
- A Commissioner said there are low income people that don't license their dogs because they can't afford to and suggested that ways to encourage them to license their dogs be explored.

Next Steps

Staff will revise the draft Terms of Reference for the Dog Strategy Task Force to incorporate comments from this meeting, and will bring a report forward to the regular meeting of the Board on May 29, 2006.

4. John Hendry (Trout Lake) Park

John Hendry (Trout Lake) Park, located east of Victoria Drive between 12th and 19th Avenues, requires a new Master Plan to guide park redevelopment and the reconstruction of the new ice rink and community centre. At an Open House on February 18, 2006, staff presented eight possible zones for locating the buildings, and participants chose three site options for further consideration. Staff presented these three site options to the Planning Committee meeting on February 21, 2006 for review and comment. The Committee asked staff to present Options A, B and E to the public on March 4, 2006 to select a location for the new facilities, and to bring a recommendation on the chosen location to the Board for a decision.

Michel Desrochers identified factors other than location that need to be considered, including those related to design, service continuity, cost, and risk. He told the Committee that at an open house on March 4th, 118 people completed feedback forms and rated fifteen design factors, and presented the Committee with the design factors as they had been rated by the public.

Delegations

- Ron Clarke circulated a copy of a 1978 newsletter highlighting the 1978 Trout Lake Master Plan for the interest of Committee members and staff. He spoke in favour of saving the Japanese Umbrella Pine trees that grow at the corner of 19th Avenue and Victoria Drive, and against placing any building in the open space east of the current community centre and sport courts. He encouraged the Board to make sure the ice rink is appropriately sited because people will be looking at it for the next 50 years. He suggested that the rink be dug into the ground and to use the steep back adjacent to the current community centre to help minimize the rink's visual impact for adjacent residents.
- Fred Henderson noted that ground water was more of an issue at Site (Option) B than at Site A, and inquired if it is possible to sink the new rink further into the ground at Site A to be less of an eyesore for the people who live there now. Staff responded that the architectural team will be looking at ways to visually soften the presence of the ice rink.

Discussion

- A Commissioner noted that the Committee expressed support for two site options (A and B) at the Planning Committee meeting on February 18, 2006, and inquired why staff are now recommending only one option. Staff explained that the recommended area can be considered to include both options as the boundary between them is arbitrary. Staff said that everyone is interested in finding a solution that is best for the park for the next 40 years, that it is important that the architect is guided by what the community said it wants, and that more than one option may be explored by the architect.
- A Commissioner inquired if the ice rink and community centre will be designed at the same time. Staff explained that a schematic concept will be prepared to identify the joint services and structural considerations (ie. common doors), and the Board will be asked to approve the overall schematic design. The ice rink will then be planned and constructed separately and the community centre process will follow later.

Next Steps

Staff will list high- and medium-priority factors to consider during the architectural phase for the Board's review and consideration when the report goes forward on May 29, 2006. Following the Board's approval of priority design considerations and the preferred site location, an architect will be hired to prepare a schematic design for the new rink for Board review and approval by fall 2006, and commencement of Phase 2 of the Master Plan will follow immediately. The ice rink will be constructed in 2008-09.

Recommendation

Staff recommended that the Board:

- A. Endorse a list of high- and medium-priority factors to consider during the architectural phase;
- B. Approve a portion of the park along Victoria Drive as the site for the new community centre / ice rink complex.

The Committee recommended that the Board receive Recommendations A and B on May 29, 2006.

5. Sport Hosting Policy for Vancouver

Susan Mundick informed the Committee about an initiative to develop a sport hosting policy for civic support of major multi-sport events that are not eligible under existing programs, but which have the potential to bring a range of direct and indirect benefits to Vancouver.

After the 2010 Olympic Games were awarded to Vancouver, interest in hosting large sporting events increased and in 2004 Council asked city staff to develop a strategy to bring major sporting events to Vancouver. A multi-department working group was formed to examine the issues of hosting major events in Vancouver venues and to research and reconcile the existing policies and procedures of various departments. In September 2004 Council approved a commitment of \$100,000 to partner with the 2010 LegaciesNow/HostingBC program to support grants for hosting of sport-related special events and tournaments leading up to 2010 Olympic Games. This initiative has been very effective and SportHosting BC has awarded more than 70 grants over the past two years, of which fourteen have been held in Vancouver. However, the program focus is on Olympic single sport events, and there are groups whose multi-sport events do not fit the criteria or existing policy framework. Some examples include the World Police and Fire Games, the Jewish Community Centre Maccabi Games, and an international triathlon.

The working group has developed a proposal to develop a broader sport policy framework and granting program for the City of Vancouver, and will bring a request for approval and funding before Council in June 2006. The report also recommends that if the policy framework is approved, the first grant be made to the World Police and Fire Games, a large, multi-sport gaming event (\$12 million budget, 65 different events, 12000 participants) planned for Vancouver in 2009.

Discussion

- Staff noted that while the Park Board delivers community sport programs at a very high level, there has not been a process of defining and articulating the role of the Park Board within a broader sport strategy that might include invitational and competitive sporting events and tournaments. A member of the Committee expressed support for increasing the Board's role in competitive sports in Vancouver.
- A member of the Committee asked if the funding request includes money for Park Board administration of the proposed granting program and staff explained that any funds would be applied directly to sport rather than to administration.

Next Steps

If Council approves the proposal, staff will report back to the Board in the fall on how to implement and fund the initiative, and will begin work in 2007. Board direction will be sought on the development of a sport strategy for Vancouver.

6. Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 6, 2006.