

**REVISED Minutes of Meeting
Planning Committee, Vancouver Park Board**

DATE OF MEETING: January 9, 2007

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Korina Houghton, Chair
Commissioner Spencer Herbert
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Mark Vulliamy	Manager of Research and Planning
Liane McKenna	Director of Vancouver East District
Alyson Thorpe	Committee Secretary

Delegations

1. Nancy Chiavario, President, Mount Pleasant CC Association
2. Anita Romaniuk
3. Walter Schultz, President, Sunset Community Association
4. Ken Bregman
5. Louise Seto
6. Susan Faehndrich-Findlay
7. Thor Larson
8. Jo-Ann Brown
9. Jason Lamarche
10. Geoffrey Dermer
11. Robin Coope
12. Brenda Penton

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

1. Approval of Minutes of December 5, 2006 Meeting
2. Outdoor Pool Replacement
3. Downtown Skateboard Evaluation
4. Leaside Tunnel Skate Bowl

1. Approval of Minutes of December 5, 2006 meeting

The minutes of the December 5, 2006 meeting were approved as presented.

2. Outdoor Pool Replacement

Mark Vulliamy presented the background to the Committee with information about the aquatic renewal strategy, subsequent Board direction, and the public process to date. The Mount Pleasant Pool is wearing out and would need to be rebuilt even if the Centre was not relocated. The Sunset Pool tank and related systems are in better shape than Mount Pleasant, but the whole pool will have to be rebuilt in the not-too-distant future. Usage levels at both pools are much lower than the era when the pools were built. The financial expenses and revenue were presented and in essence the patron pays \$1.78 and the Park Board covers \$4.53 for each swim.

Consistent with the Aquatic Strategy, the Hillcrest Facility will include an outdoor pool. The options of rebuilding both pools, rebuilding one pool only, and demolishing both pools and re-greening sites were stated. Extending the life of existing pools by retaining the buildings or selective demolition to retain the critical pool components would be expensive. Retaining the old centres would involve a large overhead cost and security risk.

The discussion points raised were (1) given the confirmation of the outdoor component of the Hillcrest Complex, does this affect the Board's direction with regard to Sunset and Mount Pleasant pools?; and (2) is funding for both Mount Pleasant and Sunset pools likely to be a Board priority in the next Capital Plan Cycle?

- A Commissioner asked for the results of public process and was advised that the Mount Pleasant majority favour building a new pool.
- A Commissioner asked the time line for Hillcrest opening and staff response was probably 2009. Mount Pleasant construction is on schedule for the end of 2007, and will open in 2008. Sunset Community Centre will open in May 2007, with the first full operating session in the fall.
- A Commissioner asked for the location of new childcare services at Mount Pleasant and was advised that it will be on the corner of school property on the boundary of the park.

Delegations

1. Nancy Chiavario said her understanding was that the current pool would continue operating until the end of the season of 2009, which would also permit the current childcare programs to continue. She personally believes the immediate community would support a water play park. The immediate community is more attached to the pool remaining in operation than the larger community. The childcare report is scheduled to go to City Council January 30, 2007. Nancy's committee has been told that there is \$750,000 available for the Mount Pleasant childcare facility, which is less than the required amount. The Mount Pleasant Community Centre Association and the Parents Advisory Committee (PAC) would commit to operating the childcare at 3161 Ontario at no cost to the Board to the end of 2009, noting that it is unlikely the move to #1 Kingsway will occur before early 2008. As well, the Association and the PAC would want to continue offering rentals of the current community centre, with the revenue going to the fundraising efforts for the childcare module.
2. Anita Romaniuk requested that both short and long term solutions be looked at. The Sunset Community was promised something in the way of a pool prior to 2009 when the Hillcrest facility will be complete. Residents in the area of Fraser and 16th, and King Edward and Main are asking about the pool at Mount Pleasant. In the Sunset area there is a high number of immigrants. The children are looked after by grandparents who don't drive and the bus route is awkward for them to get to Hillcrest. She suggested that the usage of neighbourhood pools in the future will increase due to a change in demographics. Her last point was that cars were a major factor that causes climate change.
3. Walter Schultz stated the Sunset Community Association at its meeting in September 2006 made a motion to support the Aquatic Services Review. He pointed out that Sunset had received \$11.7 million for the new community centre scheduled to open in May 2007 and he did not support soliciting money for a building to house a heating facility and changerooms to keep the old pool open. Rather than have an outdoor pool to be used 59 days a year, he supported the Park Board investing in community recreation facilities that would be used 365 days a year. He requested that time be taken to determine what was the best plan for the space.

4. Ken Bregman suggested that if the Park Board was not interested in running the old Mount Pleasant Community Centre facility, they could turn it over to the community, similar to the lawn bowling associations in the city. He is not in favour of the basic philosophy of the aquatic review, as per his previous letter.
5. Louise Seto, a resident in the Sunset community, stated that they had not been given a chance to fight for their pool. She realizes that at this time there is no money allocated but she would like to see a public process with a promise for some plan for an outdoor pool to be considered for a future capital plan. The Killarney pool is too far away and several buses are needed to get there. In the Sunset neighbourhood there are as many as four families sharing a single house. There are many kids with asthma and the rate of diabetes is increasing. The kids do not have an active soccer program in the area and the pool is the only option for these people. Few schools offer swimming programs. There is no beach or pool in South Vancouver. She reiterated the importance of an outdoor pool for South Vancouver, not a play waterpark. She requested the public consultation for a 10 year plan be arranged.
6. Susan Faehndrich-Findlay presented the benefits of a neighbourhood pool for her four children and others who like to cycle and walk to the pool. When it is summer, the children want to be outdoors and older children want to have a deep end with a diving board. They don't want to drive through the city. She mentioned that the pool is a place for 10 – 12 year old Indo-Canadian boys to hang out. She said 50 percent of school age children in the city are south of 41st Avenue. Although there was trouble at the pool with teens a few years ago, in the last three years it has become more family oriented. She suggested a reason for the drop in attendance could be that the pool has not been heavily marketed because it is being phased out.

Discussion

- A Commissioner asked for information about costs for maintaining child care services in the old building until the new facility opens in 2009. Staff responded that a more in-depth look was needed to examine the economics of the rental income stream proposed by the childcare proponents versus the cost to maintain building services. The child care area is only a small part of the facility. Nancy suggested there would be no cost to the Park Board – the costs would be covered by Community Centre rentals.
- A member of the Committee inquired about the outdoor pool at Hillcrest. Staff explained that it was expected the cost estimate would stay in the range it was presently at and this included funds for an outdoor pool.
- A member requested a public consultation in the Sunset area regarding possible uses in the short term while recognizing the need for a pool in the future. Staff indicated that funding for a pool in that area was a low priority and not likely to be forthcoming for several years. Funding for greening of the area is in the current plan. It was decided to work on a master plan.

Recommendation

The Planning Committee recommended that staff report back on a consultation framework for Sunset Park and report back on the cost and feasibility of keeping the existing Mount Pleasant Community Centre open until 2009.

3. Downtown Skateboard Evaluation

Mark Vulliamy presented the Committee with information regarding Plaza management and programming over the two year trial period. Various formal assessments of the skate plaza have been conducted, including usage statistics, a user survey, a neighbourhood survey, noise level readings, feedback from Vancouver Police Department, and site staff reports. The issue of pedestrian safety and noise on Quebec Street was addressed. The wear and tear on the Plaza surface is evident, and if the Board and Council determine to continue the operation of the Plaza, some renovations will be needed to make it more durable. Staff recommended to make the Plaza permanent, to upgrade skate elements to support long-term usage, to keep staffing at current level in order to build user stewardship and community support, and to explore options for a youth “terrain park” to accommodate a wider range of activities such as BMX, climbing walls, and sport courts.

Delegations

1. Thor Larson told the Committee that in the view of the skate park users, the Plaza was an overwhelming success, with the innovative design of the building being a big draw to the park. He supported the Plaza being made a permanent structure.
2. Jo Ann Brown, a resident at 1088 Quebec Street, spoke of the positive effect of the Plaza – she had no complaints about the Plaza itself. However, she stated that the approximately 500 residents in the City Gate Towers found it frustrating and dangerous that the sidewalk in front of their homes is used by the skateboarders as a route to the Plaza. Elderly people, young mothers with carriages, small dogs, and people waiting at the new bus stop are obstacles for the skateboarders. She requested that the issue of sidewalk safety be addressed before the next season as the number of pedestrians at Quebec and Terminal is increasing. She requested better signage, a flyer that instructs skateboarders to use the designated route and not to use the Quebec Street sidewalk. The website of the Skate Coalition says nothing about Quebec Street.
3. Jason Lamarch spoke in support of the Plaza being made permanent and commended Ben, the Skate Host, for doing an excellent job. He pointed out that events and contests at the Plaza had created a well-integrated, positive and non-judgmental scene in Vancouver skateboarding community. He noted the proximity of the Plaza to East Hastings area and suggested outreach programs. He commented that the sidewalks could be rendered unfriendly to skateboarders.
4. Geoffrey Dermer expressed thanks to the Park Board for the experience of the last two years of skating at the Plaza. He said the Plaza was a positive influence for Vancouver’s youth and he supported the structure being made permanent with the Skate Host being in attendance more frequently.

Discussion

There was discussion regarding signage for Quebec Street, follow-up with Engineering and the police, and the importance of including youth terrain parks in the next Capital Plan.

Recommendation

The Planning Committee approved making the Skate Plaza a permanent feature and recommended that staff report back to both the Board and Council on the evaluation of the trial. It was also recommended that staff carry on discussions with the City Engineering Department, the Quebec Street residents, the Police Department, and the skateboarders. The Chair thanked the participants in the audience for their presentations to the Committee.

4. Leaside Tunnel Skate Park

Mark Vulliamy presented the Committee with information regarding access to the park, the additional costs for approaches, gates, concrete, a useable grade, and the division of space. He suggested that a designer be engaged to integrate the three uses for the tunnel rather than deal separately with skateboard use.

Delegations

Thor Larson, Robin Coope, and Brenda Penton spoke in favour of keeping the skate park and asked the Committee to communicate their support of the project to the Engineering Department and Council.

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked if it would be helpful to write to Council and staff requested that time be allowed to explore the issues.

Recommendation

The Committee recommended that staff follow up with Engineering and explore the design and planning issues more fully.

5. Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2007.