

**REVISED2 - Minutes of Meeting
Planning Committee, Vancouver Park Board**

DATE OF MEETING: March 20, 2007

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners

Commissioner Heather Holden, Chair
Commissioner Spencer Herbert
Commissioner Korina Houghton
Commissioner Ian Robertson
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Terry Walton	Manager of Recreation Services, Vancouver East District
Joyce Courtney	Communications Manager
Jason Heer	Network Support Specialist
Barbara Joughin	Committee Secretary

City Staff

Judy Bader	Deputy General Manager, Community Services Group
Carol Ann Young	Childcare Development Coordinator

Delegations

1. David Chudnovsky	MLA, Vancouver – Kensington
2. Phalgun Joshi	Simon Fraser Elementary School Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)
3. Caroline Abramson	Simon Fraser Elementary School PAC
4. Stuart Mackinnon	Green Party of Vancouver
5. Margery Duda	Mt Pleasant Pool Committee
6. Nancy Chiavario	Mount Pleasant Community Centre Association
7. Anita Romaniuk	
8. Lori Tucker	
9. Lyndon Huber	
10. Angela Verbrugge	
11. Rosemary Cornell	
12. Robert Kay	
13. Holly Kerr	
14. Jim Dreichel	Mount Pleasant Business Improvement Association

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

1. Approval of minutes of March 6, 2007 meeting
2. Mount Pleasant Community Centre and Pool
3. Park Naming Process

1. Approval of Minutes of March 6, 2007 meeting

The minutes of the March 6, 2007 meeting were approved as presented.

2. Mount Pleasant Community Centre and Pool

Liane McKenna provided an update on the community centre, daycare and pool at Mount Pleasant Park. She presented background information and outlined Board and Council recommendations and decisions. She identified alternate scenarios for the old building and pool following the opening of #1 Kingsway in 2008, and put forward a transition timeline. Key issues include continuity of childcare service currently located in the community centre, and the costs for meeting the community's request to retain the outdoor pool facility.

Simon Fraser Elementary School and the Mount Pleasant Community Centre Association have requested that childcare services continue to be provided at this site. There has been a collaborative process between the school, the community centre and the city to design replacement childcare services after the building at Mount Pleasant Park is demolished. A modular building has been proposed to house the childcare. The Vancouver School Board has offered to locate it on school property, and the city has committed \$750,000 to replace the childcare service. Staff noted that it would be possible to complete the replacement of the childcare facility by the time #1 Kingsway opens if full funding were available at this time.

The community has requested that an outdoor pool amenity continue to be provided at Mount Pleasant Park. The current facilities are 40 years old and require significant capital costs for repair or replacement. Operating funds are not budgeted after 2008. In October 2005, the Board agreed to give consideration to a pool at Mount Pleasant if the community immediately began fundraising towards building a new pool in the current location. However, there have been no significant amounts raised to date.

Alternative scenarios include:

- short term retention – temporary use of existing building until there is new childcare or pool money in place; costs are a minimum of \$130,000 annually for the centre, \$70,000 for the pool; issues include funding, community capacity, community centre budget reallocation to #1 Kingsway, security at an underused building
- long term retention – continue recreation services at this location, house other public or non-profit services; costs include capital investment for essential code upgrade and programming requirements, annual operating costs; issues include splitting focus and resources in the community after the relocation of the neighbourhood community centre to #1 Kingsway
- partial retention – keep existing pool components (mechanical, change, entry); costs include capital expense of selective demolition, annual operating costs; issues include incomplete renewal, heavily subsidized swims, lost opportunities to redesign the park
- build new – rebuild outdoor pool at this location; costs include \$5 million to construct replacement, a minimum annual operating cost of \$70,000; issues are that it is not a capital plan priority, there are no other neighbourhood outdoor pools, minimal funds have been raised by the community, the new Percy Norman Aquatic Centre is nearby.

Staff presented a transition timeline and recommended that the community centre at Mount Pleasant Park be demolished after the 2008 swim season, staff be directed to plan for a redeveloped park including a waterpark and neighbourhood amenities for inclusion in the 2009-11 Capital Plan, and staff continue to work with the city, community association and School Board on replacing the childcare facility on school property.

Liane McKenna introduced city staff Judy Bader and Carol Ann Young who attended the meeting to answer questions related to childcare.

Delegations:

1. David Chudnovsky, MLA Vancouver – Kensington, told the Committee that many of his constituents have expressed concerns about the loss of recreational and childcare services at Mount Pleasant Community Centre. It is a community facility that provides an oasis in a part of the city where there are few and it is a safe place for kids to go on their own. People consider the pool to be part of their history and culture. While important amenities will be built at #1 Kingsway, they will not replace the neighbourhood facilities currently in place at Mount Pleasant Community Centre, and the interim plan needs to ensure that a necessary childcare service is not eliminated before it is replaced.
2. Phalgun Joshi, Simon Fraser Elementary School Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), told the Committee that 20% of the students at the school use the childcare facility for before and after-school care, and it is also used for kindercare, summer camps and professional development days. He is frustrated by the long process that has not yet resulted in a plan, and said that the threat to existing childcare in the community creates a lot of stress for families. The City has committed \$750,000 and the Vancouver School Board has contributed school property, even though it will reduce the children's outdoor play area. He said that closing the facility in 2008 will put a tremendous strain on the childcare facility and a commitment from the Park Board is needed to continue operating the current building until the completion of the new childcare facility.
3. Caroline Abramson, Simon Fraser School PAC, said her main concern is that while there has been discussion about an interim solution, there have been no answers. She said that keeping the existing community centre open is the most viable option. The timeline is too tight to allow the new childcare to open before the old one is closed.
4. Stuart Mackinnon, Green Party of Vancouver, said the proposal to close and demolish the Mount Pleasant Community Centre by 2008 is all based on "maybe's" and asked why the Park Board would consider removing an existing resource without having its replacement in place. This is a facility the community wants and was promised until 2009, and the Park Board should uphold this promise. Without money in place today, there is not going to be a new facility completed by a 2008 demolition date.
5. Margery Duda, Mount Pleasant Pool Committee, spoke about the community's passion for the outdoor pool. She said their research shows that the conclusions drawn in the Aquatic Review were unfounded and the September 2005 citywide Budget Survey omitted the Mount Pleasant Pool question. She told the Committee that in October 2005, the Park Board unanimously moved to keep the Mount Pleasant Pool open at least until the Riley Park pool was opened, and that a pool would be retained at Mount Pleasant. The community wants a public process to determine what kind of pool will be built, and she asked the Committee to move in favour of keeping the pool open until funding is secured for the replacement pool, and to hold to the mutual goal to replace Mount Pleasant pool.
6. Nancy Chiavario, Mount Pleasant Community Centre Association, told the Committee that the community has not yet embarked on a fundraising campaign because of the long and drawn-out bureaucratic process. She said they can and will accomplish the fundraising and the community association has enough money in the bank now to keep the community centre open for an additional year until the end of 2009. She asked the Board to direct staff to work more collectively with the community, and noted that the city should help with the provision of childcare and can afford to keep the pool open until the end of 2009.

7. Anita Romaniuk supported the October 31, 2005 motion as a Park Board Commissioner and said that although Mount Pleasant is a park deficient neighbourhood, policy should not override community wishes and concerns. She pointed to the West End Community Centre Association as an example of an association that successfully runs two community centres, and predicted that new volunteers will come forward once #1 Kingsway opens. She said fundraising has been inhibited by the uncertainty of the process, and there will be new funding opportunities emerging at the provincial level for environmentally friendly infrastructure in the next couple of years.
8. Lori Tucker said the childcare at the school is always full with waitlists, and it is an essential service that should not be interrupted. There is an obligation to provide continuous service in a safe and appropriate facility, and parents are concerned that there is no plan. She said interim portables are not an option and asked the Committee to keep the current facility open until there is a proper alternative.
9. Lyndon Huber spends most of the summer in the pool and can see no reason to close it. He told the Committee that the pool helps teenagers stay out of trouble and encourages physical activity in Vancouver.
10. Angela Verbrugge thought a democratic process was in place for the Mount Pleasant pool that would provide a pool for the community. A proper community consultation process is needed and the top three options should be put to residents for feedback. She questioned the wisdom of creating a net loss of aquatic facilities in Vancouver when the health system needs pools to keep people healthy. Outdoor pool facilities help make a world class city, and waterspray parks are not the same. She asked the Committee to find an economically viable solution to meeting the community's need for neighbourhood amenities.
11. Rosemary Cornell showed a video of the community using the Mount Pleasant pool, and brought a message from the kids in the neighbourhood – “don't be a killjoy”. She said that the neighbourhood is very healthy because residents know each other, and noted that parents depend on the pool to get teenagers out of the house during the summer. She urged Commissioners to put the welfare of the kids first when making the decision about the pool.
12. Robert Kay told the Committee that the Mount Pleasant Pool is a successful Park Board facility that is crowded with kids, seniors, and lap swimmers. He said the Aquatic Review did not effectively ask people for their opinion about outdoor pools, and noted that outdoor pools are unique and can't be compared with indoor pools. They do not offer fancy features and are perceived to be outmoded by those who make the decisions, but the outdoor pool at Mount Pleasant is full of people. He said its uniqueness is not a reason to close it and asked the Committee to keep the solution simple. It is a highly successful facility that does not need a big budget for fancy features.
13. Holly Kerr brought a message from the community that the provision of neighbourhood childcare is necessary without any gaps in service. She said it is reasonable to pay \$130,000 a year to operate the community centre and urged the Committee to keep it open.
14. Jim Dreichel told the Committee that the Mount Pleasant Business Improvement Association is deeply concerned that there is no concrete plan for replacing the childcare facility before it is removed. He asked the Committee to keep the community centre open until there is a plan in place.

Discussion

- A Commissioner asked staff for information about funding for a new childcare facility and the construction timeline. Staff replied that planning and construction of a modular facility will take a minimum of 12-15 months and that if funding were in place today, it could be completed by September 2008. Staff are concerned that only a provisional agreement for \$750,000 is currently identified and the estimated cost is \$1.5 million.
- A member of the Committee requested clarification of the Board's commitment to keep the pool open. Staff explained that the motion on October 31, 2005 approved that the Mount Pleasant and Sunset Outdoor Pools continue to be operated through the 2006 and 2007 summer seasons as long as no extraordinary costs are incurred in doing so, that the Board plan for the continued operation of one or both of these pools for the 2008 season and beyond in consideration of several conditions, and that staff report back with recommendations on these considerations by March 2007.
- A Commissioner requested clarification from delegations on their reference to the operation of the current building until 2009. A delegate responded that their understanding was that the pool would stay open until the end of the 2009 swimming season. The building would continue to operate and childcare could continue until the end of 2009, which would allow enough time to raise funds to match the City's \$750,000 to put a modular in place at the proposed site.
- A member of the Committee asked a delegate to confirm the statement that the community centre association can afford to keep the building open and running for an additional year. The delegate stated that it is imperative to provide childcare services on the site and the Association is prepared to contribute funds not exceeding \$130,000 to ensure that happens. They have had discussions with staff but an agreement has not been negotiated, and they expect that the Park Board will participate.
- A member of the Committee requested more information about interim solutions for the childcare facility. Staff said possibilities include finding space at the existing school, transferring children to other before and after school care facilities, and use of a portable. Members of the public said there is no additional space at the school, other childcare facilities are full with waiting lists, and portables are not an appropriate facility.
- The Committee discussed the difference between the outdoor pools at Mount Pleasant Park and at the future Percy Norman Aquatic Centre. The proposed outdoor pool at Percy Norman is about 4000 sq ft in size to a depth of five feet, with outdoor play apparatus. Opportunities for swimming laps and diving will be provided inside. Members of the public said that Mount Pleasant is a community pool, is safer than a destination pool because people know each other and provide supervision, is convenient and can be accessed without driving, and is highly valued by residents and their guests. A play pool does not attract teenagers or seniors, and having both deep and shallow ends in a pool is important so teenagers and younger kids can be in the same place.
- Members of the public said that the proposed outdoor pool at the future Percy Norman Aquatic Centre is an item that could be eliminated at any time to save money, and that discussion of what kind of pool to have at Mount Pleasant Park should go quickly to public consultation.
- A Commissioner raised the question of conflict of interest on a Commissioner who lives adjacent to Mount Pleasant Park and requested that it be resolved before this item comes to the Board for a vote. The Committee Chair responded that she has no conflict to declare and is confident that her decisions are in the best interests of the community and the Park Board. She said the question of conflict of interest will be discussed at a time outside the meeting.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- understand importance of having childcare in the neighbourhood, connected to the school
- Park Board is part of government and has responsibility to contribute to provision of childcare in the neighbourhood
- will do what we can to ensure a seamless transition
- have heard importance of the pool in this neighbourhood, but it is a gray area and more information is needed
- surprised to have this on the agenda tonight, let's go out and do it
- necessary to negotiate with community association about who pays how much
- ask staff to go into negotiations with community centre to find a way to keep childcare open
- should be a discussion about what kind of pool should be there
- like the idea of a public referendum
- community has said they want the pool to be there, look at taxes as a form of fundraising
- need to get childcare done, make it seamless
- need to see a concerted effort on fundraising for the pool
- Board is focused on maintaining childcare services
- keep pool open until new facility is open and then do a comparison of both
- didn't understand that the community association was betwixt and between with regard to the process
- relieved to hear that the community association is still interested in pursuing funding
- priorities in capital funding process come when seed funding is in place
- \$70,000 is worth keeping a pool open for another summer for the community
- need a community consultation process to ascertain what kind of facility we want.

The Committee discussed the next steps. A member of the Committee said it should go to the Board as quickly as possible. Staff suggested that senior staff meet with the community association first and report back to the Board with recommended solutions. The delegation from the community association said that negotiations with staff are secondary to receiving approval in principle from the Board that childcare continue in its present location until at least 2009. Members of the community asked the Committee to make a commitment to the community tonight.

A member of the Committee asked for clarification on the direction the Committee will send to the Board, and requested that the Planning Committee approve in principle that childcare continue to be located in the Mount Pleasant Community Centre until the end of the 2009 swimming season. The Committee discussed its mandate and authority and the Chair determined that the Planning Committee will forward the item to the Board for a decision.

Summary

The Planning Committee received the report for information (Commissioner Herbert contrary) and discussed it with staff and members of the community.

Next Steps

The Planning Committee asked staff to prepare a report that includes recommendations for providing continuous childcare service at Mount Pleasant Park to be brought to the Board at the earliest possible meeting.

3. Park Naming Process

At their January 15, 2007 regular meeting, the Board referred the naming of the new park at Selkirk Street and 72nd Avenue to the Planning Committee. On February 6, 2007, the Planning Committee requested that staff review a proposed naming policy and report back to the Planning Committee with recommendations for a process to name new parks.

Joyce Courtney proposed a new process for naming Vancouver parks that standardizes the procedure and includes more community involvement. She outlined the principles and process, described the proposed composition of the Park Naming Committee, and presented draft Park Naming Guidelines.

Under the new process, the Board will start the naming process by notifying residents of the process and inviting the submission of written naming suggestions. A five member Park Naming Committee consisting of three permanent members and two community-specific members will review the submissions with the support of one Park Board staff member. The committee will evaluate the suggestions considering historical, cultural and geographic elements, using the existing park naming guidelines. Staff noted that there is no urgent need to name all unnamed parks in the city.

Delegations

Stuart Mackinnon, Green Party of Vancouver, told the Committee that the proposed naming guidelines are very good. However, terms of reference are missing from the report and should define how names are to be suggested and identify reporting procedures. He expressed concern that Park Naming Guideline #3 states the Park Board will submit suggested names to community groups for input because the intention of the new process is to involve the community more in the decision-making process.

Discussion

- A member of the Committee asked why guideline #3 was included and for clarification of its intended timeline. Guideline #3 states that the Park Board will submit suggested names to community groups for input. Staff clarified that this guideline could be applied after the recommendation was made if the Park Naming Committee is not able to finalize a decision. The Committee requested that the wording of this guideline be revised.
- A Commissioner suggested that it would be useful to have background information on names of interest to know the history of the streets that parks are often named after. A member of the Committee suggested that options for naming parks for streets or geographical locations not be given priority but have equal weight with other naming options identified in the guidelines.
- The Committee discussed terms of reference for the Park Naming Committee. Terms of reference should include definitions of the committee's mandate, committee roles (for example, Chair) and its structure, reporting procedures, and number of names returned to the Board for consideration.
- The Committee discussed the number of names to be returned by the Park Naming Committee to the Board, and requested that more than one name and a recommendation be returned from the committee.

The proposed Park Naming Guidelines added a new guideline that names of individuals should only be used posthumously. This is in line with current provincial, Canadian and American naming guidelines that name posthumously in recognition for a lifetime of work.

- A member of the Committee said it is important to be able to acknowledge people for their work while they are still alive. The Committee discussed the naming of parks to commemorate living people and requested that the guideline be defined to allow the consideration of cases of exceptional lifetime achievement while a person is still alive.
- A Commissioner requested that the guidelines include that commemorative naming be consistent with the Board's mandate of recreation, sports and the environment.

Next Steps

Staff will adjust the proposed park naming guidelines as requested by the Committee and prepare a report to the Board recommending that:

- the proposed Park Naming Guidelines be approved;
- a Park Naming Committee be formed;
- the new park at Osler Street and 72nd Avenue be used as a pilot project for the new park naming process.

4. Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for April 10, 2007.