

**Board of Parks and Recreation
Committee Meeting Minutes**

DATE OF MEETING: January 21, 2008

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners
Commissioner Marty Zlotnik, Chair
Commissioner Allan DeGenova
Commissioner Spencer Herbert
Commissioner Heather Holden
Commissioner Korina Houghton
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Commissioner Ian Robertson

Park Board Staff

Susan Mundick	General Manager
Piet Rutgers	Director, Planning and Operations
Peter Kuran	Director, Stanley District
Anita Ho	Director, Corporate Services
Philip Josephs	Manager, Revenue Services
Daisy Chin	Recreation Services Co-Ordinator Special Events and Filming
Yuna Flewin	Recorder

Guests

John Nightingale	Vancouver Aquarium
Philip Davis	TVOC/ITU
Thanos Nikopoulos	TVOC/ITU
Michael Carson	TVOC/ITU
Linda Poole	Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival
Daniel Frankel	Prospect Point Cafe

The meeting started at 7:00 pm, with the following Agenda:

1. Election of Vice-Chair
2. World Championship Triathlon Even
3. Cherry Blossom Festival
4. EcoDensity
5. Hollow Tree in Stanley Park – Update
6. 2008 Budget

1. Election of Vice-Chair

Commissioner Ian Robertson was elected Vice-Chair of the Committee.

2. 2008 Triathlon World Championship Event

Staff provided a summary of the 2007 test event run by the International Triathlon Union at the Ceperley Park/Second Beach area. This event was staged to identify areas of operational improvement for the 2008 World Championship. The cycling routes involved downtown city

streets and the run route took place along the seawall from Second Beach to Third Beach. The event involved approximately 500 athletes and required 5 1/2 days to set-up and takedown. Areas of the park and beach were kept open to the public until the race occurred at which time the western portion of the park was closed for one day only. Public response was positive. Some of the concerns encountered during the event were partial seawall closure, congestion and safety issues, lack of pre-event notification to residents, communication to lifeguards, a loss of revenue, and displeasure regarding road closures in the West End. The FEST committee which is comprised of various City departments has been working with the organizers regarding last year's impact. The 2008 event will require joint approval of the Board and City Council for closures of Stanley Park, English Bay, the seawall portion and the surrounding roadways.

Philip Davis and Thanos Nikopoulos from the Triathlon Vancouver Organizing Committee made a proposal to the Board calling the triathlon scheduled for June 6-8, 2008 the largest Olympic event in Vancouver prior to the 2010 Games. The event anticipates a total of 3000 athletes from 75 different countries, to attract a prospective audience of 100,000 people, and inject upward of \$20M CAD into the local economy. The proposed 2008 Event will be delivered by the TVOC (Triathlon Vancouver Organizing Committee) with support from ITU (International Triathlon Union), Triathlon Canada, Triathlon BC, WEBIA and Pacific Spirit Triathlon Club.

The event schedule, the proposed venue, primary viewing areas of English Bay and Second Beach, equipment locations, and detailed overview maps of the bike, swim, and run routes were provided. TVOC planned to contact all individual Park stakeholders to negotiate mutually agreed event impact arrangements. Incentives and impact solutions for each stakeholder include; hosting one or more of the planned event social functions, integration into public and athlete movement, promotion and sponsorship, and other negotiated financial arrangements. The organizers emphasized that the mitigation of the impact on the park users and stakeholders is a key element in their planning.

Discussion:

The commissioners expressed significant concerns over the closure of Stanley Park and English Bay and enquired if the organizers had considered other venues and done a comparison of the impact. A commissioner questioned the financial impact on the Park Board and stakeholders. The far reaching impact of the closure on the general public, schools, and tourists from outside Vancouver was also questioned. Another issue brought up was emergency vehicle access.

To address the Board's concerns, the delegation put forth that other sites were considered, but due to the large scale of the event, English Bay and Stanley Park appear to be the best location. They suggested a designated crossing for public access during the event, the opportunity for community participation, and promotional benefits for the stakeholders in printed material and on the website. The organizers plan a broad marketing and publicity program. BC Ambulance and police vehicles will be dispatched from the site.

John Nightingale from the Vancouver Aquarium indicated he was in favour of sports events in general. However he was opposed to the closures as they will cause significant operational disruptions in restricting staff and volunteers' ability to get to work and prevent normal deliveries and other service functions. The closures will damage the Aquarium's relationships with tour groups, schools, members, and other community groups. All of the school programs and a wide variety of other activities such as birthday parties, sleepovers, and tour group

breakfasts are already scheduled for that time period. Cancelling these activities and events will damage vital relationships. The Aquarium had not been notified of this event until this past week-end but the anticipated financial impact is between \$77,000 and \$100,000.

Daniel Frankel from Prospect Point Café expressed his support of sports tourism but objected to the park closure indicating the loss to his business would be upwards of \$40,000. There would also be damage to his relationship with tour operators.

Next Steps:

Given the significant concerns for stakeholders and the serious impact on the general public, it was recommended by the Committee that the organizers consider other venues and options or work with staff to mitigate the concerns regarding closure. The Committee will reconvene at the earliest possible time to hear the resolution of the issues.

3. Cherry Blossom Festival

Staff provided a brief history and described the park locations along False Creek where additional cherry trees have been proposed. Reasons were highlighted against planting in a number of locations. The reasons include strong winds blowing away the blossoms, some park sites are or will be under construction, undeveloped land not available for planting, removal of other types of trees to make room for the cherry trees, resistance to blockage of waterfront views by residents, and some sites will not be developed prior to 2010. There are 36,000 cherry trees in the city and the proposal adds 300 trees. After the sites were evaluated only 60 trees could be recommended to be planted.

In order to support and enhance the Festival, Piet Rutgers put forward three alternate locations for planting; Queen Elizabeth Park, Stanley Park, between Ceperley Meadows and Lost Lagoon, and the southeast section of Lost Lagoon. There are already cherry trees at Queen Elizabeth Park and perhaps additional cultivars of cherry trees could lengthen the blossom season and heighten horticultural interest.

Linda Poole with the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival responded to questions from the Committee. She could understand the challenges with some of the proposed False Creek sites. She expressed appreciation for Park Board support and looked forward to working with staff on the three suggested sites.

Susan Mundick advised the Board that the Cherry Blossom Festival had also partnered with VanDusen Gardens for the planting of cherry trees.

4. EcoDensity

Piet Rutgers introduced Brent Toderian, the City's Director of Planning, who is responsible for the EcoDensity Program. Mr. Toderian outlined the principles of EcoDensity in detail and distributed to the Committee the following documents:

EcoDensity – An Introduction
Draft Vancouver EcoDensity Charter
Draft EcoDensity Initial Actions (2008-2009)

Council will be hearing reaction to this initiative from the public before and at a special Council meeting on February 26, 2008. Mr. Toderian drew the Committee's attention to a number of elements in the charter that pertain to the Park Board mandate. They are as follows:

"The City of Vancouver makes a commitment to:

Apply ecological best practices for public realm design to achieve green, beautiful, safe, accessible, adaptable, and engaging streets, parks, and public places in all communities.

Work to provide the amenities, services, and infrastructure needed to support new and existing density levels, using existing and new financial tools, with continued contributions from developers, City budgets, and other sources."

Within the Initial Action Plan Mr. Toderian brought the Committee's attention to Item #17 and #18 which refers to developing a longer term plan of land use changes in the city and a strategy to ensure the provision of adequate amenities which would need to be provided in conjunction with the densification of the city.

Discussion:

In subsequent discussions the following items were raised:

- method of securing amenities when single family neighbourhoods are up zoned
- timeline of the EcoDensity project: June 2006 start, November 2006 tool kit, February 2007 to June 2007 public launch and consultation, November 2007 Draft EcoDensity Charter and Draft EcoDensity Initial Actions, December 2007 through February 2008 community consultation
- current amenity levels and future challenges
- demographic trends
- provision of daycare facilities, schools, and senior centres
- funding for renewing old amenities
- requirement to maintain parkland base
- What are population targets for neighbourhoods?

Next Step:

The Committee thanked Mr. Toderian for the status report and requested that they be kept informed of the future progress.

5. Hollow Tree in Stanley Park – Update

Susan Mundick advised the Committee that an engineer, David Nairn, had been hired to investigate the possibility of retaining the hollow tree on a long term basis. Details of the engineer's report will be conveyed to the Board upon receipt. Internal braces are temporarily supporting the tree. The importance of saving the tree is recognized; however, if it becomes necessary to remove the tree, a commemorative mechanism could be established.

6. 2008 Budget

In response to a number of questions from the Commissioners regarding the Operating Budget

and the financial impact of job action in 2007, Anita Ho provided information on both 2006 and 2007:

Question: Was the Park Board Operating Budget cut at all in 2007?

In 2007 we did not receive any reduction on an ongoing basis. There were two one-time reductions made to the 2007 Operating Budget – NNR reduced from \$370,000 to \$296,000 and Turnover savings increased from \$63,000 to \$105,800. Both reductions are included in the 2008 Budget.

Question: What was the Golf Budget shortfall in 2007? What was the Actual and Projected Income? What were the projected expenditures versus actual expenses?

Due to the job action, the Golf Courses were closed for three months in the summer. Anita provided both 2006 and 2007 financial figures:

2007

Revenue

Budgeted \$10.2 million and Actual \$5.4 million resulting in a variance of \$4.8 million less revenue realized.

Expenditure

Budgeted \$9.4 million and Actual \$8.1 million creating a variance of \$1.3 million lower expenditures.

Overall the Golf Operations were budgeted at \$842,000 surplus to support other parks and recreation services and the actual experience was \$2.7 million deficit. The total shortfall between budget and actual is \$3.5 million.

2006

Revenue

Budgeted \$9.6 million and Actual \$8.9 million resulting in a revenue shortfall of \$0.7 million

Expenditure

Budgeted \$9.1 million and Actual \$9.2 million resulting in an over expenditure of \$0.1 million

Overall the Golf Operations were budgeted at \$524,000 surplus to support other parks and recreation services and the actual experience was \$237,000 deficit. This accounted for the \$800,000 shortfall in the golf budget.

Question: What were our gross expenditures for 2007?

Gross expenditures: \$94.4 million for 2007 and \$87.3 million for 2006

Question: What were the net parking revenues for 2007?

Parking Revenue

Budgeted \$3.4 million for 2007, Actual \$3 million and \$351,000 deficit

Budgeted \$3.3 million for 2006, Actual \$3.3 million, a small shortfall of \$33,707

Question: What was the Street Tree Budget and Actual and how many trees were lost and replaced?

Street Tree	Budget	Actual
2007	\$4.8 million	\$3.7 million
2006	\$4.6 million	\$4.6 million

The average number of new trees planted each year is 3,700 with approximately 1,200 trees lost due to damage or end of life cycle resulting in 2,500 added to the inventory each year. As a result of the storm 1000 street trees and 350 park trees (excluding Stanley Park) were damaged. \$50,000 for replacement of street trees and \$50,000 for park tree replacement were approved from Corporate Sponsorship Fund to address the loss of trees due to the wind storm.

Question: What was the 2007 Commissioners Budget and Actual experience?

Commissioners Budget	Actual
2007	\$147,600
2006	\$146,300

The difference is mainly due to 9 meetings being held in the community in 2006 and 4 meetings being held in the community in 2007.

2008 Budget Update:

On December 13, 2007 City staff informed Council that if the 2007 program continued in 2008, the impact to the budget would be \$10 million higher. The impact on property tax would be close to a 6 percent increase. Council's target is 2.99 percent increase. City managers and staff were asked to explore options to achieve efficiencies with minimal impact to customer service. Since that December meeting staff have been advised that the shortfall is not as high as \$10 million. In lengthy reviews, all city departments are looking for opportunities to operate more efficiently with no cut to services. As a result of this process the need for reduction targets is being re-evaluated.

Staff will be reporting back to Council on February 12. After Council has deliberated, budget discussions are scheduled for the February 25 Board meeting. At this point in the budget preparation we have not been assigned reduction targets.

Question: Regarding the Golf Budget shortfall of \$3.5 million how are we fixing the situation in terms of debt?

The 2007 loan payment has been made.

Susan Mundick expressed her commitment to share figures on any financial impacts due to job action when they are released by the City. The year end report is in the final stages and is being reviewed for accuracy. As soon as it is available the report will be sent to the Board via e-mail. The report on the effect of the strike will be released first and then the 2008 proposed budget will be released subsequently.

Question: Does this impact the 2008 budget?

Council has approved a motion that they want to consider a reduction in taxes for 2008 with any strike related savings from 2007. Staff are working toward the 2.99 percent tax increase requested by Council. Considering other factors including additional police costs and outside charges, the amount of the increase for taxpayers could be higher. Council could consider a one time discount based on the savings from the strike.

To summarize, the next step for the Board is to review the Council report in which the first recommendation is the Global Budget allocation for the Park Board. Once Council has received the report; staff will review the Global Budget, develop efficiency initiatives as requested, address other issues such as NNR's and will report to the Board at the meeting on February 25.

Council is expecting the strike saving report on February 12 and it is scheduled for the Board meeting on February 25.

Some important dates:

February 4 at 3 PM	the budget workshop for Boards and Council There will be a City council report about initiatives to achieve 2.99 per cent property tax increase. Intent of this meeting is to understand the whole City Budget.
February 12	Council receives the report on the Base Budget
April 1	Council deliberation on 2008 Budget and receipt of public consultation report

After February 12 staff will report to the Board in terms of the allocation of budget. Council doesn't usually approve the budget in February as they typically schedule several meetings for public consultation. The budget is then approved in April. One reason the budget update was presented now was to get the information to the Commissioners and to the general public as quickly as possible. It is important the public be aware that there will not be reductions in service and programs.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm.