

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

**DATE OF MEETING:** July 14, 2008

**ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners**  
Commissioner Martin Zlotnik  
Commissioner Korina Houghton  
Commissioner Ian Robertson  
Commissioner Loretta Woodcock

Commissioners De Genova, Herbert and Holden were absent from the meeting.

**Park Board Staff**

Susan Mundick	General Manager
Piet Rutgers	Director, Planning and Operations
Terry Walton	Manager, Recreation Services, Vancouver East District
Ron Caswell	Manager, Operations, Vancouver East District
Kate Davis-Johnson	Manager, Park Development
Ethel Whitty	Director, Carnegie Centre
Sandy MacKeigan	Community Programmer
Jessica Chen	Planner III
Linda Brindley	Recorder

**Guests**

Peter Jackson, Tennis BC  
Ryan Clark, Tennis BC  
Elizabeth Snow, Co-Chair, Core Services Review Committee

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

1. Approval of Minutes of June 16, 2008 Meeting
2. Tennis BC Presentation
3. Oppenheimer Park Design Concept
4. Core Services Review - Recreation
5. Vancouver Olympic Centre/Vancouver Paralympic Centre: Maintenance Position

**1. Approval of Minutes of June 16, 2008 Meeting**

The minutes of the Committee meeting of June 16, 2008 were adopted as circulated.

## 2. Tennis BC Presentation

Mr. Jackson stated that a group of Vancouver residents who play tennis came together last fall to discuss the possibility of an indoor tennis facility in Vancouver. This idea was first brought before the Board at the March 10 meeting during discussions of the draft Capital Plan for 2009 – 2011. During a later meeting with Mr. Rutgers, it became clear that there were a lot of challenges and that more time would be required to prepare a proper analysis.

The goal of this facility would be to provide tennis year round. The Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project is a group of citizens who advocate active living. There are a number of indoor facilities around the Lower Mainland and they are all operating at a surplus. Sources of capital for the facility could be a future Capital Plan, a loan from the Vancouver Property Endowment Fund, a Provincial grant and/or a philanthropic contribution. The criteria that need further analysis include location, whether it is a stand alone facility, the construction materials and funding. Their request is to work with Park Board staff to deliver a feasibility analysis that includes a preferred location, and identifies funding sources.

### Discussion:

The Commissioners questioned the benefit of situating the facility adjacent to an existing facility and whether the facility could be used for other sports. Mr. Jackson responded that having two facilities located close to each other would enable the sharing of locker rooms, pro shop, registration area and cafe between the two facilities. In terms of using the facility for other sports, Mr. Clark replied that the more successful facilities have restricted sports' use to tennis, but do open up their facility for use as a trade and exhibition centre or for townhall meetings.

A Commissioner stated that the projected costs for construction of a facility seemed low. Mr. Jackson replied that the reason is because a pre-fabricated unit will be used and that the bulk of the area will remain open and not require extra finishings.

The Committee agreed that it is an intriguing idea and like the idea that it will not be entirely funded by taxpayers or through the Capital Plan.

Moved by Commissioner Robertson,

**THAT Park Board staff work with this group to develop a Feasibility Study and report back to the Board in the spring of 2009.**

**- Carried Unanimously.**

### 3. Oppenheimer Park Design Concept

Staff provided an overview about recent developments in the Oppenheimer Park Redevelopment process, as it relates to the preservation of commemorative Japanese Cherry Trees (or Sakura as they are known). Oppenheimer Park is jointly operated by the Vancouver Park Board and Carnegie Centre, which is a division of the City's Community Services Group. The park is a refuge for many less fortunate people who rely on services and support offered by Carnegie staff. The idea to upgrade the park has been discussed for many years and in 2005, a Capital Plan Submission was prepared and approved in the fall of 2005. An Oppenheimer Park Redevelopment Committee was formed consisting of members who represent many different stakeholders in the community.

A concept plan was developed and then approved by the Board on March 10, 2008 and it included the removal of 10 Sakura, all of which would be replaced. In April, staff received a letter from Takeo Yamashiro advising of the significance of the Sakura in Oppenheimer Park. He, along with 70 Nikkei seniors were involved in the planting of the Sakura as a commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to B.C. Staff directed the consultants to look at some alternate designs that would retain the Sakura. Three options were developed that retained all or most of the Sakura with minimum alterations to the overall park design. Staff and members of the Redevelopment Committee have expressed support for Option 2, which retains all but three of the Sakura. The Coalition to Save the Legacy Sakura of Oppenheimer Park (Coalition) were not in favour of any of the options.

The cost of delaying the project is about \$25,000 per month due to cost escalation of construction plus increased consulting and administration costs.

#### Discussion:

The Commissioners questioned if it is the tree itself or the location of the tree that is important and if the option of relocating the removed trees within the park had been explored. Staff responded that the trees themselves are important, as well as the ground they were planted in. Because the trees were originally planted in 1977, the arborist has advised that moved trees would have only a 50% chance of survival. Moving the trees is not an acceptable compromise on the part of the Coalition.

Staff who work at Oppenheimer Park stated that the consultative process was a very inclusive process and went a long way to building consensus within the community. They have been operating at the park since the 1980s with a community centre that provides recreational, educational and artistic programs. The programs are offered year round and include seniors, children, and family programs. The fields and fieldhouse are in bad shape and need rebuilding. The City's objective is to revitalize the area without displacement and to create more opportunities for local residents.

The Coalition showed a video about the history of the Sakura.

The following delegations spoke to the Board in opposition to the proposal:

- Dave Ohori, Coalition to Save the Sakura at Oppenheimer
- Judy Hanazawa, Coalition to Save the Sakura at Oppenheimer
- Masa Ito, Coalition to Save the Sakura at Oppenheimer
- Sister Elizabeth, Franciscan Sisters Society

The following is a summary of comments provided by the foregoing delegations:

- Supports park redevelopment
- Working hard to save the trees planted by First generation Japanese
- Collected 1500 signatures to save the trees
- Respect the consultation process
- Trees mean heritage and are a legacy for all Canadians
- Submitted a revised option for the shifting of the fieldhouse towards Powell Street
- Recognizes the importance of retaining the trees for the history of the Japanese community

The following delegations spoke to the Board in support of the proposal:

- Aaron White
- Laura Saimoto, Vancouver Japanese Language School
- Matthew Matthew, Oppenheimer Park Committee
- Kristen Lambertson, Power Street Festival
- Kathy Walker
- Elisha Walker, on behalf of neighbourhood children
- Joe LeBlanc, Board member of Carnegie Centre

The following is a summary of comments provided by the foregoing delegations:

- Is a resident of the area whose children use the park
- Thrilled with redevelopment, but concerned about effects of further delay
- Withdrew from the Coalition because they want to take a compromised approach to the redevelopment
- Commend City and Park Board staff who developed a plan for the park
- Feels ambushed by a new option being presented by the Coalition at tonight's meeting
- Concerned about loss of funding if development is further delayed
- Wonders if Coalition is willing to consider raising funds for increased construction costs if delays continue
- There are many diverse needs that need to be met with the redevelopment
- Concerned about isolation of seniors in neighbourhood because they don't feel safe attending the park at the present time

The Commissioners questioned the significance of moving the fieldhouse, whether dead trees are replaced and if cuttings are an effective means of regenerating the trees. Mr. Ito stated moving the fieldhouse would allow the Powell Street Festival sufficient space to operate, while maintaining the Sakura. Staff replied that moving the fieldhouse would require redesign and realignment of pathways. Mr. Ito stated that if the trees die, they are replaced, but replacing with cuttings causes the loss of heritage value.

A Commissioner asked if there is commemoration in the park. Staff responded that there could be some significant commemorative feature built into the re-development.

The General Manager stated that the Board had approved the plan for re-development in March 2008. However, there seems to be some opportunity for compromise so it would be beneficial to have the members of the Coalition meet with the Planning Committee within the next week as to whether they proceed with the original plan, Option 2, and/or the new plan brought forward at tonight's meeting. If a compromise cannot be reached, the Board will have to make a decision whether to proceed with the original plan. Staff are asked to coordinate a meeting and report back to the Board at next week's Board meeting. The General Manager stated that the City has already committed to a commemoration at the park.

#### **4. Core Services Review - Recreation**

Staff provided a brief overview of the consultation process of the Core Services Review. This has been a three step process with the first step being the definition of the core services for community centres, the second was identifying why there would be a variation from the core services, and the third was an implementation plan. The process has consisted of meeting with staff and the Associations and going back to the Committee.

With regard to the core service from the Park Board perspective, it is defined by the Vancouver Charter in terms of parks and recreation services. It is also recognized that the Associations accommodate non-core activities within the community centres. A base level of service was established with a 30,000 sq ft building serving 25,000 residents.

Criteria used to adjust service levels include the size of the market, socio-economic conditions, cultural and ethnic makeup, other providers of service, and the condition/configuration of CC. To formulate an Implementation Plan, the most recent census data (2006) can be used for each service area. A Task Force Report will be presented to Park Board and Community Associations in September.

#### Discussion:

A Commissioner asked if the plan to merge the Champlain and Killarney Community Centres was still proceeding and staff responded that the idea has been put on hold. A new Board has been formed at Champlain Community Centre and they need more time before making a decision.

The General Manager stated that staff will work with the Associations to reach a recommendation that can be brought back to the Board for consideration. Many of the Associations did not want to make a decision on the Joint Operating Agreements before the Core Services Review had been completed so it is important to move this work forward.

**5. Vancouver Olympic Centre/Vancouver Paralympic Centre:  
Maintenance Position**

Staff stated that they are recommending a CUPE 15 position be established at the Vancouver Olympic Centre/Vancouver Paralympic Centre (formerly known as Hillcrest). The reason this is moving forward is because the facility is nearing completion and the equipment needs to be commissioned. This position will fill a statutory requirement. In terms of funding, the Operating Budget did not include funding for this position, but it will in the future.

**6. Next Meeting**

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm. The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 15, 2008.