

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation
Planning & Environment Committee Meeting
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on
Thursday, November 12, 2009**

ATTENDEES:

Park Board Commissioners

Sarah Blyth, Chair
Aaron Jasper
Stuart Mackinnon
Ian Robertson

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director, Planning & Operations
Mark Vulliamy	Manager of Research & Planning
Diane Murphy	Acting Director, Queen Elizabeth District
Judy Andersen	Supervisor of Recreation Services, Queen Elizabeth District
Hart Nijjar	Recorder

Delegations:

James Gill, West Point Grey Community Centre Association
Sharon Urton
Erica Levy, Dunbar Community Centre Association
Peter Jackson, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
Christine Eves, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
Wayne Morris, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
Janet Mackie, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
Carlos Da Costa, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
Silvia Piccioni, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
Robert Kay
Margery Duda, Mount Pleasant Pool Committee
Howard Kelsey, Canada One Foundation
Anita Romaniuk, Mount Pleasant Pool Committee
Gayle Uthoff, Renfrew Park Community Association
Keith Jacobson, Killarney Community Centre Association
Norman Zottenberg, Marpole Oakridge Community Centre Association
Lorna Gibbs, Southeast Vancouver Seniors' Association
Gary Dobbin, Vancouver P3 Tennis Group
Eric Harms, President, Hastings Community Association

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm, with the following agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of the meeting on October 8, 2009
2. Riley Rink Presentation
3. Facility Infrastructure Renewal Plan

1. **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on Thursday, October 8, 2009 were adopted as circulated.

2. **Riley Rink Presentation**

The Rink Users Association made a presentation regarding the retention of the old Riley Rink. The Association represents over 3,700 rink users and their families including various minor hockey associations and figure skating clubs. Lack of available ice time in Vancouver has resulted in the Association being unable to meet the demands of its membership. All rinks are almost fully utilized, and the loss of Riley Park rink will create more demand on fewer rinks. Less availability of ice time negatively impacts ice users in various ways. For example, less ice time is available for user groups, there are more users per session, and waiting lists are increasing. The group proposed that either the demolition of Riley Rink should be reassessed, or the rink should be replaced with an appropriate alternative.

If Riley Rink were to remain open, the Association estimated it would cost \$160,000 annually. Operating costs could be partially recouped by operating the facility as a community user group rental facility. If the Riley Park rink were to remain open but be converted to a stand-alone facility, allowing the Park Board to convert the remaining area of the facility to green space, some capital costs would be incurred. The Association estimated that the Park Board would need \$1.2 million to \$2.1 million to upgrade and maintain the rink as a stand alone facility.

The cost to build a new rink would be approximately \$15 million, and the Association acknowledged that such funds are unlikely to be available in the short term. To maintain the Riley Park rink would cost a fraction of the cost that would be incurred by building a new rink. The Association urged the Committee to consider its growing membership and the negative impact fewer rinks will have on ice users before moving forward with the closure of the Rink. The Association stated its willingness to make a staff assessment of user needs easier by facilitating discussion with user groups.

Discussion

The Committee thanked the Rink Users Association for its presentation and asked staff to address history and feasibility of keeping the Riley Park rink open. Staff acknowledged the hard work of the Association in preparing their presentation and stated their agreement that there has been a lack of ice availability over the past few years. However, by September 2010, all rinks will be open and have enough ice availability to

accommodate one practice and one game per week for all hockey teams. Furthermore, in 2005, the Park Board stated its commitment to return Riley Park to green space to offset the land required for the construction of the Hillcrest facility. If Riley were to be converted to a stand alone rink, it would cost approximately \$350,000 for a new lobby plus the cost to address major maintenance issues as referenced in the group's presentation. At this time, the operating budget for the Riley Park Community Centre has been allocated to the Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Centre, leaving no funds for the renewal of the rink. For these reasons, staff recommended against keeping and operating the Riley Park rink beyond 2011.

The Committee asked the Association to state its reasons for bringing forward the issue of ice availability so close to the scheduled closing date for the Riley Park rink. The Association acknowledged that lack of ice time has been especially problematic in the recent past, but the issue itself has been an ongoing problem for a number of years. Numerous major hockey events have been held in Vancouver, raising the profile of the sport and interest of youth in participating, but due to lack of ice time, it has been difficult to accommodate new interest.

The Committee inquired whether all stakeholder groups only accept membership from Vancouver. The Association confirmed that most players are from Vancouver. If a player from outside of Vancouver wishes to join a league in the city, permission must be granted from the league president.

The Committee noted that enrolment in schools is declining, leading to the assumption that a decrease in ice hockey registration would also occur. However, the Association's research indicated that hockey registration is outpacing population change and the Committee enquired as to why this disparity exists. The Association stated that the under 19 population is generally on the incline, and although Vancouver School Board registration numbers are down, private school numbers are increasing.

The Committee asked staff for clarification on when the Riley Park rink will be closed. Staff replied that it will be closed by the summer of 2011, and rink and community centre operations will move to the Hillcrest facility, subject to the completion of the facility.

The Committee asked the Association whether there is a willingness by ice users to help support the renewal of the rink. The Association replied that it is facing cuts in gaming funds, and the implementation of the Harmonized Sales Tax will also create cost increases. However, there is a possibility of contributions, and private funders can be approached, and a public private partnership can also be considered. Staff observed that the Vancouver Thunderbirds Minor Hockey Association was instrumental in the Park Board and UBC commissioning PERC to study the supply and demand for ice time in 2003. At that time it was also known that both the smaller rink at UBC and the Riley Rink would close.

The Committee stated its support for more ice time, but budget cuts and the HST have resulted in limited dollars, making monies for the renewal of the Riley Park rink currently unavailable.

The Committee thanked the Association for its presentation but noted that with budget constraints the Board can not afford the retention and operation of the Riley Rink.

3. Facility Infrastructure Renewal Plan

Staff presented a report on the Consolidated Major Facilities Renewal Plan. The presentation summarized previous Renewal Plans, accomplishments to date, considerations when setting priorities, and next steps.

Long term planning began in approximately eight years ago, which allowed the Park Board to undertake major and minor renewals and created a queue system to organize priorities.

Renewal plans were initially organized around facility type. The Community Centre Renewal Plan, released in 2001, focused on large scale projects akin to full facility replacement, as well as outlining smaller scale projects. The high priority large scale renewal projects outlined in this report have been completed, as demonstrated by the successful construction of the Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Centre, the Sunset Community Centre, and the committed construction of the Trout Lake Centre. The Aquatic Services Review, also released in 2001, focused on modernizing facilities. A two phased approach was implemented, with the first phase consisting of the (re)construction of one city-wide pool (Percy Norman), one community pool (Killarney), and one neighbourhood pool (Renfrew). Phase two priorities will go forward after analysis of the impact of phase one. Renewal of ice rinks has focused on addressing structural and seismic issues, and three rinks have been completely replaced. Other major projects that have been completed but were not included in the renewal plans were made possible by partnerships with the community and funded outside of the Capital Plans.

Presently when setting priorities, facility condition, potential service lift, siting, and external funding opportunities are all considered in conjunction with the City capital planning context.

With the stated criteria in mind, the community centres that should be allocated priority funding in the short term are Dunbar, Hastings, and Marpole-Oakridge. In the medium term, the Strathcona and Kerrisdale community centres as well as the Vancouver Aquatic Centre should be considered for funding. Lastly, in the long term, the West Point Grey, Douglas Park and West End community centres, the Kerrisdale, Templeton, and Lord Byng pools, and the Kerrisdale Arena and Sunset ice rinks should be considered for funding. New projects that have not been prioritized include the Killarney Seniors Wing, an indoor tennis facility, an indoor skateboard facility, and the Mount Pleasant outdoor pool.

The next steps will focus on further development of the Consolidated Facility Renewal Plan and a report on its findings to the Park Board. After the Board has approved the plan, staff proposes to conduct up to three planning/feasibility studies in relation to Board-approved renewal priorities.

Discussion

The Committee asked staff whether the money allocated for the Capital Plan can fund three feasibility studies. Staff replied that some external assistance would be needed, but currently there are enough monies to meet about two thirds of the funding requirements.

The Committee observed that high priority items in previous renewal plans have been addressed, while medium priorities have been overlooked. The Committee inquired if the time lag between addressing of medium scale priorities leads to them becoming high scale priorities in the future. Staff confirmed that medium scale priority items can become high priority projects if they are not addressed in a timely fashion. However, the queue system and the additional Olympic funding have aided in allowing for completion of projects more quickly than anticipated.

The Committee asked staff whether there is an ongoing dialogue between the Park Board and the Vancouver School Board regarding further partnerships. Staff replied that two community centres, West Point Grey and Strathcona, have been identified for seismic upgrade by the Vancouver School Board, so there may be an opportunity to look at co-location although the idea is very premature.

The Committee asked staff whether some of the new projects that have yet to be prioritized, such as the proposed indoor tennis facility, can be built in conjunction with high priority items. Staff replied that currently there is uncertainty regarding co-location of an indoor tennis facility with a community centre, as it may be difficult to secure funding for such a project.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Committee:

- James Gill, West Point Grey Community Centre Association
- Erica Levy, Dunbar Community Centre Association
- Sharon Urton
- Peter Jackson, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
- Christine Eves, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
- Wayne Morris, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
- Janet Mackie, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
- Carlos Da Costa, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
- Silvia Piccioni, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
- Robert Kay
- Margery Duda, Mount Pleasant Pool Committee
- Howard Kelsey, Canada One Foundation
- Anita Romaniuk, Mount Pleasant Pool Committee
- Gayle Uthoff, Renfrew Park Community Association

- Keith Jacobson, Killarney Community Centre Association
- Norman Zottenberg, Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre Association
- Lorna Gibbs, Southeast Vancouver Seniors' Association
- Gary Dobbin, Vancouver P3 Tennis Group
- Eric Harms, President, Hastings Community Association

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

- The West Point Grey Community Centre Association has never considered a full centre renewal, and is interested in smaller scale strategy
- The Province has said they will not renew the lease of the Jericho Lands
- Need to find a revenue neutral short term solution
- The West Point Grey Community Centre Association has funds to contribute to a short term solution, provided a plan is put forth for longer term strategy
- A community centre is needed in the West Point Grey area and should not be taken away
- The Dunbar Community Centre Association is satisfied with the suggested prioritization
- The Dunbar Community Centre has serious accessibility, seismic, and safety issues, and the Association is excited to move forward with the Park Board to address these issues
- The Vancouver Indoor Tennis Project first presented information on the benefits of tennis and the need for an indoor facility in 2008
- It was the Project's understanding that staff were tasked to undertake a feasibility study, but there has been no uptake since that date
- In the spring of 2009, the Project was presented with possible sites, but no monies were available for a feasibility study
- Tennis is an inclusive sport and can be played by all age and income levels
- The current lack of an indoor facility means that tennis can not be played all year round
- Tennis players from Vancouver are forced to go to other municipalities and use their indoor facilities in poor weather, but travel to other municipalities is not a feasible option for all tennis players.
- Private indoor tennis facilities are out of reach for many
- Mount Pleasant Pool meets the criteria for renewal priority, and Hillcrest is not an adequate substitute
- A commitment was made in 2005 to renew the pool, but was subsequently removed from the Capital Plan
- Mount Pleasant Pool can be replaced by a simply constructed pool to reduce construction costs
- There is strong community support to renew the pool and a commitment by the board of the community centre to hire a fundraiser so Park Board will not have to rely solely on its own funds
- The Canada One Foundation is proposing to fund the re-surfacing of tennis courts at Kits Beach in conjunction with the funds allocated for upgrading of the courts by the Park Board

- The Foundation would like a decision be made on whether project will go forward so planning can move ahead
- The Renfrew Park Community Association requested that the Renfrew Park Community Centre be added to the Renewal Plan
- The community centre is need of a seismic upgrade, and has had to give up funds in the past due to this
- The area by the community centre is very populated and currently there are not enough rooms to meet the number of programs the Association would like to provide
- A senior's facility is required in South East Vancouver
- The Park Board, City, and federal government have expressed interest in helping fund the project
- Federal government funding for the senior's centre is contingent on the project being completed by March 2011
- A feasibility study for the centre will be completed by December 2009
- The seniors in South East Vancouver have waited a long time for their centre, and it should be added to the next Capital Plan
- The Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre is very old and has been identified as having a service gap
- The layout of this community centre presents a challenge as different portions of it have been upgraded at different times and there is no overall cohesiveness
- Renewal plans for the centre should begin immediately
- The Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project has been examining the possibility of a public private partnership to create an indoor tennis facility
- The Project would like the Park Board to narrow potential locations for an indoor facility provided by staff so that information can be provided to private funders
- The Hastings Community Centre is an old facility and presents safety concerns for users
- The Hastings Community Association would like to partner with the Park Board to continue to work on the renewal of the community centre

Discussion

The Committee asked the West Point Grey Community Association whether they funded their own feasibility study. Mr. Gill replied that the Association hired an architect to develop three scenarios and is deciding which option to move forward with. The Committee inquired whether negotiations are still ongoing for the continued use of the buildings on Jericho Lands by the community centre. Mr. Gill confirmed that talks are ongoing.

The Committee asked the Dunbar Community Centre Association whether they have funds to contribute to a feasibility study. Ms. Levy confirmed that funds are available, and restated the Association's willingness to partner with the Park Board on this project.

The Committee asked staff to clarify what was conveyed to the Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project in the past and what direction was given to them during the March 2009

Committee meeting. Staff was directed to find and evaluate sites for a minimum six court tennis facility adjacent to an existing community centre. At this time, due to the many priorities for the replacement of existing centres, rinks, and pools, it is not recommended that an additional feasibility study be added to the short term list. A feasibility study would cost a small amount of money to conduct, but the facility itself would cost a minimum of eight to ten million dollars.

The Committee asked staff to elaborate on the sites that were presented to the Indoor Tennis Project for consideration. Staff stated that the list of about a dozen sites presented to the Project did not identify an obvious choice.

The Committee asked staff to clarify on where they stand with the proposal from the Canada One Foundation. Staff has not received a proposal and the Chair recommended that the item be put on the agenda for the next Committee meeting

The Committee asked staff whether they have considered a simpler pool design for Mount Pleasant to reduce renewal costs. Staff replied that if the pool is renewed, it needs to be done in a manner that will make it enjoyable for all ages and accommodate various user groups.

The Committee asked staff for clarification on why the Renfrew Community Centre lost its priority in the previous capital plan. Staff noted that the centre was part of the 2001 Capital Plan, but was designated as an intermediate low priority project, in anticipation of certain improvements being made. Funding for those improvements were reallocated to the pool projects.

The Committee questioned whether it will be possible to construct the Killarney Community Centre senior's addition by 2011. Staff replied that it is an unlikely possibility because the feasibility study has not been completed, the size of the facility has not been determined, and the plans for the facility have not been finalized.

The Committee asked the Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre Association whether they will be able to financially support a renewal study. Mr. Zottenberg replied that he is unsure at the present time whether the Association will be able to contribute, but there was funding allocated by the Park Board for a study in the past. Staff clarified that in the Draft 2009-11 Capital Plan, a reference was made to funds for the Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre, but the final Plan did not include the names of specific community centres.

The Committee asked the Association whether they have considered moving the community centre. The Association replied that the possibility has come up in discussion, but would be explored in a feasibility study.

The Committee asked staff what would happen in the Oakridge area if the community centre were to be moved. Staff observed that there is a significant population in that area, but no possibilities have been considered yet.

The Committee asked staff to clarify the cost of the Killarney Senior's Wing. Staff estimated that construction would cost five million dollars. The Committee clarified that the Park Board would contribute the site of a senior's centre, but an outside agency would be responsible for funding the project. Staff confirmed that this is the case, but the City will have to approve all plans.

The Committee thanked all delegations for their presentation and expressed support for recommendation put forth by staff to conduct three feasibility studies. The Park Board's priority is to focus on facility renewal and this direction will continue.

The Committee concurred that staff should conduct three feasibility studies for the three short term projects outlined by staff. The Committee also asked staff to report back on the additional cost of conducting feasibility studies to attach a six court indoor tennis facility to the short term projects being considered.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm

Piet Rutgers, Director,
Planning & Operations

Commissioner Sarah Blyth,
Chair