

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation
Planning & Environment Committee Meeting
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on
Thursday, December 10, 2009**

ATTENDEES:

Park Board Commissioners

Sarah Blyth, Chair
Aaron Jasper
Constance Barnes
Raj Hundal

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director, Planning & Operations
Liane McKenna	Director, Vancouver East District
Peter Kuran	Acting General Manager
Danica Djurkovic	Manager of Facility Development
Thomas Soulliere	Acting Co-Director of Stanley District
Sean Healy	Aquatics Supervisor
Catherine Kinahan	Assistant Director, Legal Services
Carlene Robbins	Bylaw Enforcement Manager (2010 Games)
Hart Nijjar	Recorder

Delegations:

- Jami Koehl, Mustel Group
- David Duprey
- Robert Kay
- Margery Duda
- Anita Romaniuk, Mount Pleasant Pool Committee
- Rosemary Cornell
- Stuart Kreisman
- Tamara Flick-Parker

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

1. Approval of the Minutes of the meeting on November 12, 2009
2. Mt Pleasant Park, Community Centre and Pool Consultation Results
3. No Smoking Policy
4. 2010 Winter Games Bylaw
5. Stanley Park Information Kiosk
6. 2010 Committee Meeting Schedule

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on Thursday, November 12th, 2009 were adopted as circulated.

2. Mt Pleasant Park, Community Centre and Pool Consultation Results

Staff presented an update on the Mount Pleasant Community Centre and Pool consultation results. Discussion regarding the future of the park began in 1999, with the goal of finding a more central location for a new community building that would better meet the needs of the community. The initial consultation process concerning the future of the existing building and pool began in 2003. Between August and November 2009, further consultation was conducted with stakeholders and community members to aid the Board in making its final decision regarding the park. The Mustel Group was retained to conduct this public consultation. Advertising of the consultation process occurred through signage in the park and community centre, publication of newsletters, as well as letters and phone calls to stakeholders. Staff introduced Jami Koehl of the Mustel Group, who discussed the results of the consultation.

The consultation process itself consisted of qualitative and quantitative data collection via focus groups, an on-line bulletin and open-access questionnaires which garnered over 700 responses. The goal of the consultation process was to assess attitudes towards three options for the park. Option 1 would turn the land into green space, Option 2 would allow for the construction of a new pool and new change rooms, and Option 3 would retain the existing building.

Results from the focus groups and on-line bulletin board indicated the importance of green space to participants, and the significance of the Mount Pleasant pool and community centre to residents. Many stakeholders and neighbours found the move of the community centre to #1 Kingsway disappointing and favoured Option 2, which includes a new pool and change rooms at Mount Pleasant.

The results from the open-access survey found that the new pool option was most positively received by respondents. Seventy-nine percent of respondents viewed the option favourably and the majority of respondents also selected the option as their most preferred outcome. The green space option received a mixed response, while the option that would retain the building received a largely negative response.

Based on the consultation results, staff recommended the design and development of the park that would allow for a pool to be built at a later time when capital funds become available, and to decommission the building.

The Committee thanked staff and the Mustel Group for their presentation.

Discussion:

The Committee questioned whether participants expressed concern about the way the consultation process was conducted. Ms. Koehl observed that, on the whole, individuals participating in the focus groups were enthusiastic and responded positively to the consultation process.

The Committee asked staff for clarification on the timeline for decommissioning the building and the park development process, if staff's recommendation were to be adopted. Staff replied that the decommissioning process will begin soon after obligations for the use of the building have been met, and the process will take three to four months to complete. The park redevelopment process will begin after the process has been approved by the Board and include a public consultation phase.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Committee:

- Jami Koehl, Mustel Group
- David Duprey
- Robert Kay
- Margery Duda
- Anita Romaniuk, Mount Pleasant Pool Committee
- Rosemary Cornell

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

- The survey results articulate the value the pool has in the community, and the results are viewed positively by the community
- There is concern that if the staff recommendation is adopted, the community will be without a pool for a number of years
- An alternative scenario is to keep the pool open and renew it as needed and staff should examine the cost of this alternative
- The existing facility could be used as artist space
- A feasibility study would need to be conducted and would take approximately six months to complete
- Maintenance costs for the building during the six month period as well as the cost of the feasibility study itself would not be the responsibility of the Park Board
- The Mount Pleasant Pool Committee will begin to strategize regarding a proper fundraising process to raise money for the construction of a pool
- It needs to be determined whether the Park Board will be able to contribute any funds
- A full size swimming pool should be placed in the park
- More community participation is needed

The Committee asked staff about the feasibility of keeping the Mount Pleasant pool open, and renewing it as needed. Staff observed that the pool is beyond its life expectancy and that it could cease to function at any time. A phased renewal, mechanical plant first, and pool tank second, is not supported by staff because of the poor condition of all the components.

The Committee questioned Mr. Duprey on how the pool would fit into his proposed plan to use the Mount Pleasant building as artist space. Mr. Duprey stated that his organization is neutral in regards to the future of the pool, but are able to keep the pool where it is if desired by the community. The Committee also asked Mr. Duprey how the community would be involved in his proposed plan and how he would address the structural concerns raised by staff. Mr. Duprey noted that the community's input will be used to inform the feasibility study and aid in deciding what types of services will be provided in the building. His organization will take responsibility for bringing the building up to code as required. Staff noted that it will take \$4 million to \$5 million to bring the building up to code and \$132,000 annually to maintain it. Mr. Duprey confirmed that he will be able to cover the stated costs, although all funds required are not currently at hand.

Staff expressed concern over Mr. Duprey's proposal, as there are ongoing costs associated with the building and the funds currently promised by Mr. Duprey will only cover the cost of a feasibility study. The capital costs associated with the building are high and will take some time to generate. Although Mr. Duprey's intent is commendable, the Mount Pleasant facility may not be the best location for his proposed plan. Furthermore, the building is in a residential area so it is important to ensure that the community will support any proposal. Without an open proposal call it is also difficult to guarantee that Mr. Duprey's proposal will be the best value for the community.

The Committee asked the Mount Pleasant Pool Committee how much money they have raised. Ms. Duda noted that the focus of the Committee at the moment is to clarify the fundraising process before any substantial fundraising begins. The Committee asked staff whether there is a less costly way to build a new pool than the \$6 million previously stated, assuming the building will be decommissioned. Staff noted that change rooms will need to be constructed to accompany the pool at a combined cost of \$5 million.

The Committee acknowledged the good work Mr. Duprey is doing in the community, but because of the concerns expressed by staff, it will support staff's recommendation to decommission the building and design and develop the park to allow for a pool to be built in the future when funds become available. The recommendation will go the Board for final approval on December 14, 2009.

3. No Smoking Policy

Smoking in park spaces has been a focus of attention in recent years. Staff recently distributed a survey to consult with the community on establishing smoke-free zones on park property.

The survey was posted on the Park Board website from the period of October 23 to November 12, 2009 and garnered 608 responses. Ninety percent of respondents were non-smokers, while the remaining 10% were self-identified smokers. The majority of respondents were weekly visitors to Vancouver parks and were in favour of the Park Board creating a policy on outdoor smoking. Seventy-four percent of individuals felt the

Park Board should take a leadership role to provide clean, smoke-free air, while 10% thought the Park Board should play a more modest role, and 16% thought the Park Board should be compliant with laws, but remain neutral on the topic. When asked whether a smoking restriction would affect their usage of Vancouver parks, only 7% of respondents stated their usage would decrease, while the remaining respondents thought the restriction would not create behavioural change or would increase their use of the park system. Lastly, survey responses indicated strong support for smoke-free zones in parks spaces including beaches, playgrounds, playing fields, trails, and other undesignated areas.

For the Park Board to be able to pass a no-smoking bylaw, amendments would have to be made to the Parks Control Bylaw. Currently, the Park Board may not have the authority to prohibit smoking, but could be granted this power by City Council which has the authority to regulate smoking under Section 330 of the Vancouver Charter. Amending the Parks Control Bylaw to include a smoking ban will create numerous benefits including alignment with the Health Promotion ideals of the Park Board, improved community and environmental health, reduced litter, safer parks spaces, and consistency with policies in other municipalities.

It is estimated that the bylaw will be implemented in spring of 2010, once its contents have been approved by the Park Board.

Staff introduced Stuart Kreisman who is an endocrinologist with St. Paul's Hospital and has been working closely with Park Board staff to develop a policy on smoking. Mr. Kreisman was pleased with the direction of the survey findings and encouraged the Board to ban smoking on all park property, including the Stanley Park Seawall. Staff concluded the presentation by asking the Committee for direction regarding the scope of the ban and whether they should examine banning smoking on all park property, or whether it should be limited to certain areas.

Discussion

The Committee questioned how a smoking ban would be enforced. The Park Board has limited enforcement powers, but similar to how other bylaws are enforced, the focus would be on public education through signage and park rangers. The Committee supported the direction of the survey findings. It directed staff to examine a smoking ban on all park property and provide details on how much revenue other municipalities are generating by ticketing individuals who break the bylaw.

4. 2010 Winter Games Bylaw

Staff presented information on the 2010 Winter Games Bylaw, the enforcement coordination plan, and the interdepartmental working team. City staff has developed a bylaw enforcement plan that aligns with the principles of public safety, public domain protection, and aesthetic protection. The plan will be administered by field teams, the funding for whom will be secured through the City, Province, and Olympic and Paralympic Organization. Bylaws will be enforced through the use of the Municipal

Ticket Information (MTI) system, which will allow field teams to ticket offenders immediately after an offence has occurred. Implementation of the MTI will create a streamlined ticketing process and fall in line with current practice in other municipalities.

It is proposed that a pilot project be undertaken during the 2010 Winter Games to test the MTI system. The pilot project will fine individuals for vending in a park without permit, performing in a park where prohibited, distribution or posting of advertising in a park without permit, driving a vehicle on a footpath or promenade in a park, and littering. All offences will carry a fine of \$250. Staff asked for the Committee's endorsement to bring a Park Board Ticket Offence Bylaw to the Board for approval on the January 18, 2010 meeting.

Discussion

The Committee asked for clarification on how the public will be informed of the bylaw and whether consideration will be given to first-time offences. Staff replied that the implementation of a warning process is being considered whereby an individual will be informed that they are committing an offence, and if the illegal behaviour does not cease, a ticket will be issued. Information about the bylaw will also be posted on the website and communicated through the media.

The Committee expressed concern over ticketing for distribution of leaflets, as people may feel their right to free speech is being violated. Staff noted that commercial businesses are responsible for the bulk of flyer distribution on park property and the bylaw will not extend to ticketing items related to political opinion. Over the last summer, park rangers dealt with 4,500 cases of non-compliance, and will be faced with a similar situation during the Olympics, making it an ideal period to conduct a pilot project.

The Committee thanked staff for their report and endorsed presenting the information to the Board for approval during the January 18, 2010 meeting.

5. Stanley Park Information Kiosk

Commissioner Jasper brought forward a suggestion that the Park Board should examine opportunities to promote facilities for the purposes of revenue generation, such as potential expansion of the Stanley Park Information Kiosk.

Staff presented information on current concession revenue generation. A concession improvement strategy was released in 2008, which outlined ways to increase revenue generation. One of the recommendations from the strategy was that high profile locations should be contracted out, similar to the agreement that led to the creation of the Watermark Restaurant. The Watermark is a very successful business, generating \$2.5 million in revenue annually, \$240,000 of which is received by the Park Board. The second recommendation stemming from the strategy was to partner with the Aquarium to replace the trailer at the Aquarium with a bistro type restaurant, the cost of which would be covered by the Aquarium, which will be part of the next Capital Plan. Another

recommendation was to examine the feasibility of contracting out certain concession stands. The concern with this recommendation is that concessions are significant revenue generators, and by contracting them out, the Park Board may lose out on that revenue. Concessions should only be contracted out if the return will be greater than the profit currently generated.

The Stanley Park Information Kiosk is a fairly new facility that sells some food items, but has been recommended to remain primarily an information distribution facility. Revenue from the kiosk is high during the summer months and recoups costs associated with running the kiosk through the winter months, but may not be the ideal concession for expansion due to its role as information provider.

The following delegation requested to speak to the Committee:

- Tamara Flick-Parker

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

- There is a lack of signage in Stanley Park promoting attractions, particularly the Farmyard
- Selling tickets for attractions at the Information Kiosk as a good idea
- There should be cross promotion of attractions
- The Kiosk should sell healthier food

Discussion:

The Committee inquired whether monies from facilities such as the English Bay Bistro could be used to facilitate other improvements. Staff confirmed that monies can be used in that way, but not all concessions are ideal candidates for renovation because updates to adjoining washrooms and change rooms may also be required. The Committee asked about the feasibility of providing a brochure that lists attractions in Stanley Park, other Park Board facilities, and Olympic venues. Staff noted that many of those types of brochures are already available at the Information Kiosk.

The Committee asked staff about the possibility of selling tickets to attractions at the Information Kiosk. Staff noted that tickets to attractions are already sold at the Horse Drawn Carriage and is only a short distance from the Kiosk, so it is unlikely that selling tickets at both venues can be justified. Furthermore, the main purpose of the Kiosk is to provide information to the public. However, marketing strategies and the concession strategy can be re-examined to determine more ways to generate revenue.

The Committee asked staff to report back with a work program to update the concession strategy and develop potential marketing strategies, including the potential expansion of the Information Kiosk. Staff will report back to the Committee on the information requested by way of Memo early in 2010.

6. 2010 Committee Meeting Schedule

The Committee approved the dates provided for 2010 and agreed to change the meeting time to 6:30 pm. The first Planning and Environment Committee meeting in 2010 will be on January 7.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

Piet Rutgers, Director,
Planning & Operations

Commissioner Sarah Blyth,
Chair