

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation
Planning & Environment Committee Meeting
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on
Thursday, April 7th, 2011**

ATTENDEES:

Park Board Commissioners

Raj Hundal, Vice Chair
Aaron Jasper
Stuart Mackinnon
Ian Robertson
Loretta Woodcock

Park Board Staff

Malcolm Bromley	General Manager
Peter Kuran	Deputy General Manager
Danica Djurkovic	Acting Director, Planning & Operations
Terry Walton	Acting Director, Vancouver East District
Gordon Barber	Manager, Revenue Services and Marinas
Thomas Soulliere	Manager, Recreation Services
Bill Manning	Manager, Operations – Parks and Arboriculture
Bill Stephen	Acting Supervisor, Arboriculture
Sophie Dessureault	Integrated Pest Management Coordinator
Katherine Isaac	Planner
Darren Peterson	Sport Strategy Coordinator
Kevin Tuerlings	Recorder

Delegations:

- Karen Cooper, “Save Our Elms” Group
- Drew Jackson, “Save Our Elms” Group
- Thomas Mueller, “Save Our Elms” Group
- Eileen Mosca, Grandview - Woodland Area Council
- George Challies, Heritage Vancouver
- Ryan Clarke, CEO, Tennis BC
- Peter Jackson, Tennis BC
- Wayne Morris, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project
- Hanif Mamdani, Kitsilano Boathouse
- Adam Smith, Kitsilano resident

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm, with the following agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of the March 3, 2011 Meeting
2. “Save Our Elms” presentation regarding Elm Trees on East 6th Avenue

3. Indoor Tennis Feasibility Study Proposal
4. Boathouse Restaurant Patio Proposal

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on Thursday, March 3, 2011 were adopted as circulated.

2. “Save Our Elms” presentation regarding Elm Trees on East 6th Avenue

The Committee invited Karen Cooper, Drew Jackson, and Thomas Mueller of the “Save Our Elms” Group to make their presentation.

The following is a summary of their presentation:

- The residents of East 6th Avenue were shocked when the initial notice for removal of the trees was given.
- Park Board staff have been responsive to the needs of the community once the residents voiced their concerns for the elm trees and are grateful for the decision to get a second opinion through the arborist from Arbortech.
- Believes the Park Board lacks a management plan for older streetscapes and has a very technical approach to identifying at-risk trees with a broad framework of criteria.
- The street tree budget has decreased over the years and now stands at \$750,000 for the 2009-2011 period.
- Would like the Park Board to work toward renewing the elm trees but if some must be removed it is preferred that they be replaced with elms of the same or similar species.
- Stress the need for community involvement throughout this and similar processes.
- Would like the Park Board to develop a new plan for identifying at-risk trees that includes historical, environmental, aesthetic, and community values as well as the existing technical and safety aspects.

The Committee thanked the group for their presentation.

Staff advised the Committee of the process of identifying at-risk trees, informing residents, and the proposed process for removal and replacement of some of the elms.

A change in natural colour and other signs of disease are the initial signifier of an unhealthy tree. Over the years the elm trees on East 6th Avenue have required three times more maintenance than other mature trees in the city.

An area that presents itself for a closer look is community involvement. However, the Park Board followed their standard practice of giving 14 days notice by sending out letters and erecting signs informing area residents of the intended tree removal.

Staff admit that the criteria for identifying at-risk trees is very technical and they must adhere to the existing guidelines and regard public safety as the number one priority. The pruning on the elms was done to reduce the weight of the canopy and remove deadwood to limit the possibility of falling branches. It is not possible to maintain the proper shape of the canopy while adhering to the height restrictions presented by hydro lines and guaranteeing a safe and healthy tree.

It is hard to control the growth of elms therefore large trees of a different family that are easier to control may be an option for replacement. The Park Board must think long term and be practical about the success of street trees and cannot bargain on public safety in the case of unhealthy trees. It is felt that some trees must be removed and that some may be preserved at the desire of the community. Further decisions regarding types of replacement trees will be considered.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Committee:

- Eileen Mosca, Grandview - Woodland Area Council
- George Challies, Heritage Vancouver

The following is a summary of the foregoing delegations:

- Wide community support was impressive and became clear the trees were loved by a large number of community residents.
- Supports Park Board's recent move to help citizen involvement, and maintaining and creating a policy on urban forests.
- Encourages Park Board to replace elm trees with trees of same species.
- To address gradual erosion, heritage Vancouver agrees with neighbourhood recommendation to review policy for examining trees.
- Trees are often being replaced by small ornamental trees. Need to recognize the danger of losing this historic canopy.

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked how many of the trees identified by both the Park Board and Arbortech must come down. Staff answered the report cited 16 trees must be removed and 15 must be heavily pruned. However, the degree to which a tree is pruned and still aesthetically acceptable is subjective.

A member of the Committee asked the delegation to expand on their desire to only remove the trees in a case of an emergency. The delegation responded that they understand the risk assessment of trees but are asking to have a more informative explanation of what an at-risk tree looks like.

A member of the Committee asked who is liable for damages caused by falling trees on private property. Staff answered that the owner of the damaged property may seek damages if it is shown that negligence on the part of the Park Board was the reason for the falling tree or branch.

A member of the Committee asked the delegation if they would be against replacing the removed elms with trees that are similar. The Delegation replied that if they were to be replaced they would prefer Siberian Elms because they are resistant to Dutch elm disease. The residents are seeking to preserve the canopy and want to maintain a street of elms and suggested the City look into stronger and more protective hydro lines such as Hendrix cables.

A member of the Committee asked staff to comment on the possibility of Hendrix cables. Staff answered that Hendrix cables combines three normal hydro cables into one single line and would not fix the height requirement issue for trees under hydro lines.

A member of the Committee asked if there is any benefit to creating tree diversity during tree replacement. Staff answered that monocultures allow for pests and diseases to spread more quickly and that tree diversity helps curb this. It is also beneficial to have multiple trees because one species may not last as long as another which would ensure the street always has some trees on it.

The Committee thanked all the participants of the discussion and the residents of East 6th Avenue for coming to the meeting and expressing their concerns. The Committee suggested that a review and revision of the Park Board's policies concerning street trees and community consultation take place.

A break was taken at 7:58pm.
The meeting reconvened at 8:06pm.

2. Indoor Tennis Feasibility Study Proposal

Staff presented the Indoor Tennis Feasibility Study which explores demand, business models and opportunities for partnerships for indoor tennis in Vancouver

Tennis is well distributed across gender, age, and abilities with BC leading the provinces in sports participation despite BC players having the lowest degree of access to indoor facilities. Players must travel to UBC, North Vancouver or Richmond for adequate public indoor facilities. This illustrates a need for an additional 32 courts on top of the current 10 within a 20 minute drive of Vancouver.

Several options are available to address Vancouver's demand for indoor tennis facilities such as a national training centre that has 8 indoor courts and 8 outdoor courts; a standalone municipally run tennis centre providing 6 courts and basic amenities; 4 or 6 courts added onto an existing community centre; or a seasonal structure that would be made near an existing facility with shared amenities.

There are three suggestions for moving forward which would include introducing a new city-wide tennis strategy in 2012, undertaking a major facility review in 2012/13 that would include indoor tennis facilities, and propose a pilot covered structure for indoor tennis which would be included in the 2012-14 Capital Plan. Staff will come back to the Board with more details on this structure, location, and cost for the final Board approval.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Committee:

- Ryan Clarke, CEO, Tennis BC
- Peter Jackson, Tennis BC
- Wayne Morris, Vancouver Indoor Public Tennis Project

The following is a summary of the foregoing delegations:

- If indoor tennis facility comes to fruition, Tennis BC will help with programs, coach certification, manuals, officials, development – essentially, they will be free consultants.
- Urban youth academy (free camps for kids) will have programs throughout summer rather than just 3 – 4 weeks.
- An indoor facility would allow for development of athletes, officials, coaches and volunteers.

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked if Tennis Canada had made a decision to site a national tennis centre in Vancouver. The Delegation answered that it is unlikely but no final decision has been made. The opportunity is still there to engage Tennis Canada but the focus must be taken away from Alberta for Vancouver to secure the facility.

A member of the Committee asked if there would be capital funding that would come along with the possible national tennis centre. The Delegation answered there would be funding from Tennis Canada and there is a possibility of provincial and federal funding.

A member of the Committee asked how many courts would need to be made for financial help from Tennis Canada. The Delegation replied that the 8 + 8 court option must be made. Eight courts is the minimal amount for events and tournaments.

The Committee thanked the participants for their input and said they are looking forward to seeing the new findings.

Commissioner Mackinnon left the meeting at 8:39pm.

3. Boathouse Restaurant Patio Proposal

Staff presented on the proposal put forth by the Kitsilano Boathouse Restaurant for an expansion of their restaurant to include an outdoor roof patio. In April 2010 the Boathouse took over the location's lease from the Watermark restaurant and since that

time the location has seen an increase in revenue of 33% and an increase in demand that has prompted the request for expansion.

The proposed expansion would take a portion of the roof area and put in 60 seats with 12 feet of green space surrounding it. There will be no umbrellas or higher structures on the patio.

Staff introduced Hanif Mamdani from the Kitsilano Boathouse restaurant to present the Boathouse's proposal. The objective of the new roof patio is to increase seasonal patio seating from June 1 to September 15. The addition of 60 seats would be adjacent to the north end on the second floor just off the existing dining room.

The key considerations for hours of operation would be within the lease: the patio will be open from 10am - 10pm. Also, there would be no addition of an outdoor kitchen, no amplified music coming from the patio, no umbrellas and no heaters and guest access would be through the restaurant to minimize outside foot traffic. The construction would be minimal with a short timeline and limited use of power tools. With the proposed 100 days of seasonal operation the Boathouse expects to generate an additional \$1 million dollars in sales.

The following delegation was available to answer questions from the Committee:

- Adam Smith, Kitsilano resident

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked what the residents in the area think of the proposal. The delegation answered that the impact of the building is minimal at the best of times although they believe the patio will increase the noise and visual impact due to increased movements on the roof and the increased height of the patio barriers.

A member of the Committee asked if this is a summertime patio only and if the expected \$1 million dollars in sales is based on proven results. The delegation answered that the plan is for the patio to operate only during the summer and that patios that currently exist in Whiterock and English Bay generate close to \$1 million with similar patios.

A member of the Committee asked if this would need to go back to the Development Permit Board in terms of adding an addition. Staff answered that it would most likely not need to go to the Development Permit Board but it would certainly require a revision to the development permit.

The Committee expressed concerns about the proposal but added that the Boathouse has been a beneficial stakeholder and is operating a good business. There is not enough information to approve the proposal. The Committee recommends that staff initiate a public community consultation for further feedback.

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm

Danica Djurkovic, Acting Director,
Planning & Operations

Commissioner Raj Hundal,
Vice Chair