

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation
Planning & Environment Committee Meeting
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on
Thursday, June 2nd, 2011**

ATTENDEES:

Park Board Commissioners

Sarah Blyth, Chair
Stuart Mackinnon
Ian Robertson
Aaron Jasper
Loretta Woodcock
Constance Barnes

Park Board Staff

Malcolm Bromley	General Manager
Peter Kuran	Deputy General Manager
Danica Djurkovic	Acting Director, Planning & Operations
Thomas Soulliere	Manager, Recreation Services
Sean Healy	Supervisor, Aquatic Services
Jenny Jung	Special Events & Filming Coordinator
Katherine Isaac	Planner
Kevin Tuerlings	Recorder

Delegations:

- Karen Tsang
- Margery Duda, Vancouver Society for Promotion of Outdoor Pools
- Colin Booth, Kerrisdale Community Centre Society
- Chris Heath, Kerrisdale Community Centre Society
- Alistair Taylor, Kerrisdale Community Centre Society
- Michael Dubelko
- Cynthia Low, Britannia Community Centre Society
- Gwen, President, Board of Management, Britannia CC
- Anita Romaniuk, Vancouver Society for Promotion of Outdoor Pools
- Annette Floyd, False Creek Residents Association
- Gayle Uthoff, Aquatic Sports
- Helen Fielding
- Jordan Myers, Vancouver International Marathon Society
- Geoffrey Buttner, Vancouver International Marathon Society

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

1. Approval of Minutes of the April 7, 2011 Meeting
2. 2012 Vancouver Marathon Route Proposal

3. Pool Study Update

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on Thursday, April 7, 2011 were adopted as circulated with recommended revisions.

2. 2012 Vancouver Marathon Route Proposal

Staff presented to the Committee the proposed change of route to the 2012 Vancouver Marathon, an event that is a long standing tradition with close to 15,000 participants across the various races included in the event.

The proposed changes are focused on the route taken through Stanley Park; the starting point will also be changing from Concord Place to Queen Elizabeth Park. The route change is requested to add new dimensions to the race, showcase more of Vancouver, and attract more participants.

In the past the route has primarily taken place on the roads through Stanley Park, with vehicle access to the park restricted from 7am to 10am, although the causeway remained open. The major change is essentially moving the race from the road routes to the seawall, and while this will be the largest race to take place on the seawall, the City's FEST committee and Stanley Park stakeholders are both supportive of the change.

There will be an organized approach to mitigate impacts to visitors before and during the race. The next steps in planning include developing a traffic management plan and public consultation with residents and stakeholders affected by the route.

The following delegations were available for questions from the Committee:

- Jordan Myers, Vancouver International Marathon Society
- Geoffrey Buttner, Vancouver International Marathon Society

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked how non-participants will be kept off the seawall. Staff answered that an engineering firm is being hired to study the site and potential issues. The resulting recommendations will be used to determine the best spots for signage around the route and best park access points. The main objective is to communicate to regular users well in advance. On the event day, volunteers positioned around the route will inform visitors of alternate routes for walking and cycling during the race.

A member of the Committee asked if there is a danger to participants when the path narrows between Siwash Rock and the Lions Gate Bridge. The delegation answered that the area is a concern that has been considered, and that the safety of participants is the

highest priority. To reduce the potential for over crowding there will be a cap of 5,000 marathon participants for 2012.

A member of the Committee asked if there is any liability to the Park Board in case of injury. Staff answered that there will be no liability to the Park Board because it is mandatory for the organizers to have insurance for the event.

3. Pool Study Update

Staff presented the Pool Study Update, which was a result of a Board Motion in September 2010 that instructed staff to proceed with the Pool Assessment Study in 2010-2011 in order to review and evaluate existing pools in the Park Board system. While the entire report is not yet complete, it is expected to be completed by fall, with this current version acting as an interim report.

Staff introduced Josie Chubak and Roger Hughes, the two consultants who work on the Pool Assessment Study, to present their findings thus far. In 2001 the Vancouver Park Board commissioned the 2001 Aquatic Services Review which reviewed usage, condition, and need for aquatic facilities, compared facilities in neighbouring municipalities, and recommended a strategy to reconfigure aquatic services that met city-wide needs and increased participation.

Phase one, operating from 2005 to 2010 as a result of the 2001 study, is complete, having seen the opening of the Renfrew, Kilarney, and Hillcrest Pools. Phase two, which includes the existing pools and service levels assessment, is ongoing and will have more determined findings and long-term projections based on the results and actions of the current study. There is currently a good distribution of pools across the city – all major indoor pools are within 3km of another pool – with 85% of Vancouver residents within a 25 minute walk of a pool.

The 2001 recommendations have to date been carried out successfully: to build one of each neighbourhood, community and city-wide pool (Renfrew, Killarney, and Hillcrest); maintain four major outdoor pools (Second Beach, Kits Beach, New Brighton, and Maple Grove); and phase out standalone outdoor pools (facilities with combined indoor and outdoor pools are more feasible). All these steps will increase the number of swims across all facilities while reducing the per swim operating costs & subsidies.

The assessment shows that when comparing three indoor pools and three outdoor pools of similar stature, the indoor pools have a much higher annual participation number, as well as a more feasible cost per swim model than the outdoor pools. Also of note, standalone pools are far more costly than combined use facilities (including combined indoor/outdoor pool facilities) due to the latter being able to share amenities, services, and staff, as well as having the option to extend the swim season into colder months.

The key findings from the ongoing 2011 Pool Assessment Study are as follows: investment is needed in the 4 unique outdoor aquatic facilities; spray parks are preferable

to wading pools due to health regulations; explore opportunities to incorporate outdoor components into future indoor pool renewal. The proposed next steps are to complete inventory, system analysis, and findings in June, update the first year numbers from Hillcrest in September, and to complete the final report in the fall of 2011.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Committee:

- Karen Tsang
- Margery Duda, Vancouver Society for Promotion of Outdoor Pools
- Colin Booth, Kerrisdale Community Centre Society
- Chris Heath, Kerrisdale Community Centre Society
- Alistair Taylor, Kerrisdale Community Centre Society
- Michael Dubelko
- Cynthia Low, Britannia Community Centre Society
- Anita Romaniuk, Vancouver Society for Promotion of Outdoor Pools
- Annette Floyd, False Creek Residents Association
- Gayle Uthoff, Aquatic Sports
- Helen Fielding

The following is a summary of the foregoing delegations:

- Not able to spend a lot of money on vacations; outdoor pools provides space for a local “vacation.”
- Indoor pools are where you swim, train, and workout. Outdoor pool is a place to socialize and be a part of the community as well as swim.
- Believes the report already concludes that there will be no additional outdoor pools, even though the study is ongoing.
- Calgary has 8 outdoor pools, Edmonton has 5, Winnipeg has 10, Mississauga has 7, Toronto has 47 plus over 100 wading pools; Vancouver should learn from other municipalities.
- Solar pool heating will reduce pool heating costs and extend pool season by weeks; addresses problem of cost.
- Providing good outdoor destinations becomes extremely valuable in a community; ability to have picnics is a great experience.
- Mt. Pleasant pool should be added to the next capital plan.
- The Kerrisdale pool does not have the resources to accommodate the demand for services.
- The Kerrisdale pool is past its life cycle and requires a large amount of upgrades.
- A 25 minute walk is not a reasonable distance for groups of kids in recreational programs; children also want to swim in their own neighbourhood.
- 2001 Pool report clearly identified Britannia as the next facility priority for renewal.

- Outdoor pools have start-up and close down costs because they don't run all year.
- Outdoor pools allow for freestyle swimming; not limited to laps, and not limited by pre-booked swim programs.
- A new indoor facility has not been built since 1979, yet the population has grown since then by close to 200,000 people.
- Asked that current sport group users are included in the redevelopment plans of the Aquatic Centre.
- A firm believer that there is no better way to spend taxpayer money than to use it toward preserving outdoor pools.

Discussion:

A member of the Committee asked in terms of the consultant recommendation to include an outdoor component in all indoor pool facilities, what would the ideal component be. The consultants answered ideally everything that was offered in the indoor pool, would be offered in the outdoor component, such as deep lanes for laps and areas for children and teenagers, but realistically the outdoor pool would compliment what is offered inside.

A member of the Committee asked how the consultants decided on the recommendation to renew Kerrisdale before addressing other neighbourhoods' needs, such as Marpole, which does not fall within the 3km distance to a pool. The consultants agreed that Southern Vancouver is lacking a pool, but the recommendation to renew Kerrisdale is based on its proximity to popular transit corridors, a high school, and its co-location with a community centre, which would benefit more of the population than a Marpole pool.

A member of the Committee asked if the consultants can provide feedback on the cost of a basic pool. The consultants answered that the new pool in New Westminster cost \$5 million, where \$3.5 million is actual cost of construction. An outdoor pool in Abbotsford was \$1.2 million, though it was much more basic and had no change rooms; if you add soft costs to the project the cost increases to nearly \$2 million.

At this time Commissioner Robertson left the meeting 8:08

A member of the Committee asked how much a feasibility study cost to fix Kerrisdale. Staff answered that if it is the community centre, rink and pool it would cost approximately \$180,000 – \$200,000 to conduct a feasibility study.

A member of the Committee asked if staff can advise on how close they are to closing the Kerrisdale pool. Staff replied that the Kerrisdale pool is a good example of what they are dealing with in older Park Board facilities. Kerrisdale is high on the list for pool renewal and there is a great opportunity to work on the rink, pool, and community centre once a redevelopment strategy has been conceived.

A member of the Committee asked if staff was aware the Kerrisdale facility was in poor shape. Staff replied that the facility is approximately 10 years past its life, though the

facility is safe and there are regular checks on health regulations, structure and other building systems. Temporary covered pools are not made to be permanent structures; they use an excessive amount of energy for heating and are not a recommended model moving forward.

A member of the Committee asked how many swimmers are using Britannia annually and what the subsidy is. The consultants answered that Britannia sees 94,000 participants in a year with the cost per swim at \$11.11, and the subsidy at \$6.25. The cost per swim is high because the school district looks after maintenance and repair; once those factors are taken out, it is expected the cost per swim will come down to around 7 dollars.

A member of the Committee asked if there are any immediate concerns with safety at the pool that the Britannia representatives would like to be made known to the Committee. The delegation answered that each year they put in about \$500,000 – \$750,000 in capital maintenance. This year money is being spent to upgrade the HVAC system; chlorine-laden air is leaching into the fitness centre and there are struggles with mould and decay.

A member of the Committee asked if the delegation from False Creek Resident Association considered pools included in apartments as an alternative to the lack of pools. The delegation answered that most indoor building pools are 50 feet long, and very few have the preferred 25 metre pool. Also, they do not provide swimming lessons or life guards, and the ability to swim should not be limited to those who can afford a condo that has a pool.

A member of the Committee concluded that increased participation is still a guiding principal and board direction. Currently the Committee is unsure if the future Capital Plan will allow for spending toward any pool facility, and based on participation levels and cost per swim, standalone outdoor pools are no longer feasible. The Committee feels comfortable with the direction the report is being taken, and is in favour of renewing Kerrisdale, Britannia and the Aquatic Centre, if funding from the future Capital Plan permits it.

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 PM.

Danica Djurkovic, Acting Director,
Planning & Operations

Commissioner Sarah Blyth,
Chair