



Date: February 6, 2012

TO: Members – Vancouver Park
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Meeting Schedule 2012 and Procedure

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Park Board’s Planning and Environment Committee, and the Services and Budgets Committee be consolidated into one committee called the Park Board Committee;***
- B. THAT the attached 2012 Park Board Committee meeting dates be approved;***
- C. THAT staff report back on additional measures to expand public engagement; and***
- D. THAT staff report back on alignment of Council and Park Board Procedure By-Laws.***

POLICY

The Vancouver Charter sets out requirements for Park Board meetings, and provides the authority for adopting procedure by-laws.

The Park Board Procedure By-Law applies to all meetings of the Park Board and its committees.

The City of Vancouver Procedure By-Law 9756 applies to procedures where the Park Board Procedure By-Law does not address a procedure.

Robert’s Rules of Order apply to procedures not addressed in either the Park Board or City of Vancouver Procedure By-Laws.

BACKGROUND

The Park Board holds regular Board meetings typically every two weeks, on the Monday preceding Council meetings. In addition, the Park Board has a Planning and Environment Committee that meets when required on Thursdays, and a Services and Budgets

Committee that meets when required on Tuesdays. In 2011, the Park Board held 19 regular Board meetings and 12 committee meetings.

Many agenda items are brought first to committee for discussion and recommendation, and then advanced to the Park Board for decision. Since committee and Board meetings have been on different days of the week, members of the public interested in a topic have had to attend twice, listening to the same staff reports twice, and possibly making the same presentations twice. This duplication does not happen at City Council, where, as a result of recent changes to procedures, every committee meeting is followed immediately by a Council meeting that has the authority to accept the recommendations of the committee and make decisions accordingly.

This staff report proposes to make it easier for the public to participate in the political process by consolidating the two Park Board committees into one committee, and holding committee meetings on the same night as regular Board meetings, so that agenda items can be presented and discussed, public delegations can be heard and decisions can be made all on the same evening. Further, it is proposed that staff report back on how Park Board meeting procedures can be brought into a greater consistency with Council meeting procedures and on additional measures to expand public engagement.

DISCUSSION

The Park Board has requested that staff explore ways to open up public engagement so that more people can participate in the discussion of parks and recreation issues, that more relevant information is provided upfront, that the variety of engagement methods be expanded, and that public input be made more efficient and relevant. As a first step, this report recommends holding committee and regular meetings on the same day for greater efficiency of public participation and staff resources. Further proposals for changes will be reported later.

Committee and Regular Meetings

Parliamentary tradition differentiates between regular meetings of an assembly (e.g. the Park Board) and committee meetings.

Regular meetings, excluding numerous smaller procedural subtleties,

- are the forum for making decisions;
- are more formal in the way the meeting is conducted;
- require seconding of motions;
- allow members generally to speak once on a motion;
- and typically do not provide for public delegations.

Committee meetings

- make recommendations (rather than decisions) and forward them to regular meetings for decision;
- are less formal;

- do not require seconding of motions;
- allow members to speak multiple times on a motion; and
- provide for public delegations to speak on agenda items.

City Council proceeds generally in accordance with these principles. Any Council agenda item that the public wishes to address is referred to committee for that purpose. Once the committee has made its recommendation, the item is reported to the regular meeting of Council for decision. Every Council committee meeting is now followed by a regular Council meeting that receives the committee report and that may adopt the committee recommendations as decisions.

The Park Board currently has two committees; both are standing committees, that is they have a continuing existence. Staff are proposing that the two committees be consolidated into one committee, called the Park Board Committee, and that every Board member is a member of that committee, further, that all agenda items that require Board discussion or attract public delegations are referred to the Park Board Committee. That is, the committee will receive staff reports that are published on the Park Board webpage a week in advance of the meeting, giving members of the public early access to the relevant information.

The committee meetings are proposed to be held on Mondays of Council weeks, the same day currently scheduled for regular Board meetings, see attached meeting dates. Every committee meeting is proposed to be followed immediately by a regular Board meeting so that the committee recommendations can be reported and adopted as Board decisions. Agenda items that require neither extensive discussion among Board members nor attract public delegations can be placed directly on the regular Board meeting agenda, along with any in camera items. Both committee and regular meetings are public meetings, in accordance with the Vancouver Charter, unless there is a need for the Board to meet in camera.

In addition to these committee and regular meetings, staff briefings that are not open to the public will be scheduled as the Board requires in preparation of future committee and regular Board meeting agendas.

Additional Public Engagement

Staff have begun looking into additional ways to give the public access to relevant parks and recreation discussions in line with newer developments in engagement tools. The list of techniques that staff are looking into include expanded use of social media, application of consultative software tools, town hall meetings with open agendas, and web-based front-end information exchanges. Staff will report back on implementation of these ideas.

Procedure By-Laws

The City's and Park Board's procedure by-laws differ slightly. The City Clerk has expressed an interest that the fundamental rules of order be common among all the

decision-making bodies of the City, for the benefit of all attending meetings. In addition, there are some specific current initiatives that would benefit from the adoption of common procedures:

- training of meeting coordinators that would be qualified to manage meetings of Council, Committee, and Advisory Bodies (assembling agendas, managing speakers and correspondence, providing procedural advice to Chairs, producing minutes in a standardized format), in order to develop flexibility for things like vacation coverage;
- capture of certain pieces of meeting data (e.g. issues on agendas, decisions) for publication on the City's web site and for conversion to open data. There would be benefit in being able to assemble such information city-wide in the same format; and
- development of an integrated Council meeting management system that can be adopted by other bodies including the Park Board, with cost benefits stemming from decreased customization costs based on one set of procedures.

Staff propose that the Park Board Procedure By-Law be reviewed for greater consistency with the City's Procedure By-Law, and that staff report back on any changes that might be contemplated.

SUMMARY

This staff report proposes to make it easier for the public to participate in the political process by consolidating the two Park Board committees into one committee, and holding committee meetings on the same night as regular Board meetings, so that agenda items can be presented and discussed, public delegations can be heard at the Committee meetings and decisions can be made at the regular Board meeting, all on the same evening. Further, it is proposed that staff report back on how Park Board procedures can be brought into a greater consistency with Council procedures.

Prepared by:
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TD/< Typist's initials >

Attachment:

2012 PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING DATES
AT 7:00 PM IN THE BOARDROOM

January	16 30	July	09 23
February	13 27	August	Summer Break
March	26	September	17
April	16 30	October	01 15 29
May	14 28	November	26
June	11 25	December	10

REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS WILL BE HELD FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS.