



Date: March 15, 2012

TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Park Naming

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board endorse a new process for the naming of parks focused on more public engagement, more flexibility, and more efficiency.

POLICY

The Park Board has jurisdiction over Vancouver parks, including the naming of parks.

BACKGROUND

Since 2007, the Park Board has had a formalised process for the naming of parks that requires at minimum three separate appearances on the Board agenda, that is fairly rigid in its procedure, and that consumes considerable volunteer and staff resources. It is proposed to replace the old process with a more flexible approach that maximises the use of newer public engagement tools and provides more efficiency.

DISCUSSION

A number of parks in various phases of development can be named within the next two years. These include a new park in the False Creek Flats between Malkin and National Avenues, a new park at Main Street and 18th Avenue, a new park at Fir Street and 6th Avenue, and a new park in East Fraserlands between Pierview Crescent and Kent Avenue North. Park Board staff are reviewing the current naming process in order to focus resources on expanded public engagement.

The Park Board's Park Naming Guidelines, attached as Appendix A, differentiate between two types of suitable names: geographic names that relate the park to its location (e.g. Oak Park and Oak Meadows Park on Oak Street) and commemorative names referencing historical events (e.g. the cooperage on the site that is now Coopers' Park) or a person (David Lam Park). It is proposed that these Naming Guidelines will remain in effect.

The current naming process requires a formal initiation of the process by the Board, the appointment of a naming committee for each park by the Board, and approval of the park name by the Board. This process has been used in the naming of two parks: Oak Meadows Park on Oak Street at 37th Avenue, and Ebisu Park on Olser Street at 72nd Avenue (named after the Japanese god of fishermen to commemorate the historic Japanese community in Marpole). The process worked well in generating appropriate names, but was resource-intensive.

The new approach to park naming is proposed to be initiated by staff, consists of an intensive public engagement to generate, support and discuss name ideas, and concludes with a decision by the Board on the park name.

The public engagement process will be web-based, and supported by traditional outreach methods to include people who do not use the web. At the core is an interactive web forum where staff can introduce the naming process, present any suggestions that may have been received, invite people to bring forward ideas for names, and allow people to comment on any name proposals. This web forum will be supported by a news release, social media, newspaper ads, and postings both on site and at local community facilities. Submissions will be accepted in all formats: as web forum comments, by email, by phone, or in writing. If indicated, staff may shortlist the proposals for further comment.

In the past, the naming of parks has been initiated in many ways, and the new approach to park naming seeks to preserve that. Names that are brought forward by community petition, by competition (Name this Park!) or by initiative of the Board will be vetted in the manner described above.

Once the public engagement has run its course, staff will bring a report to the Board summarising the process and asking the Board for a decision on the park name.

The Park Board has a Naming Rights Policy and a Commemorative Naming Policy for community facilities which are not proposed to be changed.

SUMMARY

Staff are proposing a new approach to park naming that focuses resources on expanded public engagement before decision by the Board.

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APPENDIX A

Park Naming Guidelines

Proposed park names will be evaluated by considering historical, cultural and geographic elements and using the following park naming guidelines:

1. **Geographic:** the park, trail, road or other feature being named generally should relate to a constant feature either nearby or within that park. This could relate to a bordering street name or a natural or man-made feature. This does not preclude the consideration of a name already in common use for the park. Such geographic criteria give ease of identification with relation to the park.
2. **Commemorative:** when no such constant feature is present or it is desired to commemorate an historical event or person important to the Park Board, City of Vancouver, or a person having made a substantial contribution to the Park Board, a park may be named for that person. Generally, names of individuals should only be used posthumously, except in the case of a living person who has a lifetime achievement consistent with the Park Board's mandate.