

Date: November 18, 2013



TO: Board Members - Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Environmental Education and Stewardship Task Force

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Board approve the Terms of Reference for the Environmental Education and Stewardship Task Force.
- B. THAT the Board appoint up to two (2) Commissioner co-chairs of the Environmental Education and Stewardship Task Force.

POLICY

The Board endorsed Phase 1 of its new Strategic Plan on May 18, 2012, including the strategic objective to be "a Leader in Greening".

The Board approved a Leader in Greening motion on December 10, 2012 that directed staff to (among other tasks) establish a Leaders in Greening Task Force that would develop strategy and actions for the Leaders in Greening strategic plan objective, identify performance metrics to measure achievement of these actions, and engage partners, volunteers and community groups to work together in greening or educational projects that work to achieve our goals (full motion included as Appendix A).

The Mayor's Engaged City Task Force was established in October 2012, with the mandate to increase neighbourhood engagement and improve upon the many ways the City connects with Vancouver residents. The Task Force has produced a preliminary report with recommended quick start initiatives, with a final report expected before the end of 2013. It is expected that some of the Task Force findings will be relevant to the Park Board's Environmental Education and Stewardship Task Force.

BACKGROUND

Commissioners asked staff to establish a Leader in Greening Task Force in December 2012 (Appendix A). The Leader in Greening section of the strategic plan direction is "through our actions we demonstrate leading green and horticultural practices and preserve, protect and create green space". Much work is already underway in this section of the strategic plan including the recently completed Local Food Action Plan as well as the Green Operations Plan (underway), the Biodiversity Strategy (underway), the Urban Forest Strategy (underway), and the Bird Friendly Landscape Guidelines (underway).

In order to complement this work, it is recommended that this task force focus on Environmental Education and Stewardship, particularly the relationships the Park Board has with volunteers and community organisations working to provide education and stewardship opportunities in parks and community centres. This will support implementation of two objectives connected to the Healthy Ecosystems goal in the Park Board Strategic Plan:

- Goal 4.1 - Green Stewardship: Model and advocate for best practices in ecosystem enhancement and management.
- Goal 4.3 - Green Education & Advocacy: Use Park Board expertise, programs, facilities and partnerships to increase awareness and knowledge of sustainable living.

TASK FORCE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate:

1. The Environmental Education and Stewardship Task Force (EEST) is advisory to the Park Board Committee;
2. EEST will develop highly strategic and focused goals, strategy, actions and performance metrics for the Park Board to include in an Environmental Education and Stewardship Action Plan; and
3. EEST will engage partners, volunteers and community groups to work together in development and implementation of this plan.

Responsibilities:

1. Stay connected and integrate with existing green stewardship and education policy, strategy and activities in the city.
2. Integrate with the Park Board Strategic Plan, the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, and the Engaged City Task Force.
3. Understand the existing contributions that the Park Board makes to green education, advocacy and stewardship in the city.
4. Focus on action and implementation, building on existing vision and strategy.
5. Find highly creative and innovative ways to address budget and staffing constraints.
6. Work collaboratively and respectfully with other task force members and other stakeholders.
7. Complete a final report, consisting of recommended and prioritised actions for the Park Board to consider.

Timeline:

The Task Force will start its work in November 2013 and aim to wrap up an action plan by July 2014.

Phase 1 - learning (Nov.-Jan.). Task Force works with Park Board staff and current stewards, educators and volunteers working in/with parks, to understand current activities, successes, opportunities and challenges.

Phase 2 - visioning and grounding (Feb.). Task Force imagines what could be possible, then evaluates that against capacity, feasibility, and potential for success.

Phase 3 - action planning (Mar.-June). Task Force develops actions and performance metrics and prepares final report.

Membership (10-12):

Members may include:

1. Up to 2 Commissioner co-chairs
2. Up to 3 park partners
3. Up to 3 other organizations actively working in parks/community centres
4. Up to 1 City staff
5. Up to 2 Park Board staff (planning, ACE)

One Chair and one Vice-Chair will be appointed. Members will be appointed for a 1-year term to complete their work. Because this is a working committee, all members will be voting members, however the group will strive to work through dialogue and consensus.

The Task Force may appoint a reasonable number of working groups to assist with its work in order to invite more specific experience and expertise into the process. Membership may include persons willing to serve who are not members of the task force. Potential working groups might include:

1. Stewardship
2. Education

Time Commitment

The Task Force will meet approximately 5 times over the course of the project. Meetings will take place in the Board Room at 2099 Beach Avenue at a time that is convenient for all members. Working group meetings will occur as needed, as determined by the Task Force, and it is hoped that each Task Force member will also join at least one working group and that a Task Force member will serve as chair of each working group.

Task Force meetings last approximately two hours, with a longer workshop format anticipated for the initial "learning" discussion. A minimum of approximately 4 additional hours a month is spent on e-mail and other correspondence, working group meetings, research and networking. Preparation time for all meetings is required.

Public Consultation

Staff and Task Force will consider other focused consultation opportunities at key stages during the development of the action plan based on available resources and Task Force objectives. Potential methods might include: development of an on-line space, inviting people to participate through community centre communication channels, and engaging existing park partner networks.

Prepared by:

Parks
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
/LC

Appendix A: Leader in Greening Motion

Park Committee/Board Meeting - December 10, 2012

WHEREAS

1. The Park Board is responsible for providing citizens access to quality green space that supports local biodiversity and a healthy ecosystem;
2. The Park Board has finalized its Strategic Plan that contains as one of its high level directions "Leaders in Greening";
3. The Park Board has existing targets to make our operations more sustainable such as "Zero Waste" and "Zero Carbon", and must make a robust plan to achieve these targets;
4. The Park Board is working on achieving the goals of the Greenest City Action Plan;
5. The Park Board would like to meaningfully engage with the staff, the public and community leaders to take advantage of the best current ideas for developing a more sustainable operation and promote green initiatives throughout the City.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1. Staff direct resources towards establishing the portfolio for a "Sustainability Officer" in the Park Board with the responsibility of overseeing and managing our efforts to become "Leaders in Greening";
2. Staff establish a "Leaders in Greening" Task Force comprised of community experts, staff and Commissioners to make policy recommendations and identify opportunities that would:
 - a. Develop sustainability strategy and actions for the Park Board's "Leaders in Greening" objective;
 - b. Identify performance metrics that would help to measure our achievement of these actions; and
 - c. Engage our partners, volunteers and community groups to work together in greening or educational projects that work to achieve our healthy ecosystem goals.