



Park Ranger Funding and Safety

Excerpted from Minutes 2017-10-02

Reconvened on 2017-10-11

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MOVED by Commissioner Coupar

SECONDED by Commissioner Crawford

WHEREAS:

1. The mission of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is to provide, preserve, and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit all people, communities, and the environment;
2. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (Park Board) is established under the Vancouver Charter and has possession, jurisdiction and control of all areas designated as permanent public parks of the City;
3. Section 496 of the Vancouver Charter states that “Every warden, life-guard, patrolman, or watchman employed in the parks by the Board shall, while in the performance of his duties within the parks, be ex officio possessed of all the powers and authority of a police constable.”;
4. In May 2000, The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation established the Park Ranger program in response to, a) growing competition for space and the increased intensity of activity in many public spaces in the downtown, and b) an expectation on the part of park users that competing interests be moderated and balanced as part of park stewardship;
5. Since 2000, the Park Ranger program has grown and expanded in scope and responsibilities: For example, to include by-law enforcement for the ban on smoking in Vancouver parks as introduced in September 2010;
6. In recent years, the Park Board and its budget have experienced significant challenges related to drug use and garbage in various Downtown parks, notably Andy Livingstone Park, Emery Barnes Park, and Stanley Park, and increasingly at Hinge Park, Creekside Park, and others;
7. Used syringes, in particular, represent an ongoing safety risk in a number of Vancouver parks, especially for children, and Park Board Commissioners and Staff have received numerous expressions of concern from parents and others who frequent Vancouver parks;
8. An estimated 28,000 person-hours were allocated to Park Ranger services in the 2017 Park Board budget, which is the equivalent of 22 FTE Park Ranger positions to patrol 240 Vancouver parks;
9. Vancouver parks are open from 6:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. daily, and often accessed and used 24 hours a day, while Park Rangers are typically not



on duty after 8:00 P.M., which places the burden and cost of by-law enforcement in City parks on the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) during the overnight hours.

10. The existing Park Board budget for Park Rangers and park maintenance is inadequate to address the significant challenges related to drug use and garbage in various parks.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation formally requests that Vancouver City Council authorize additional funding for the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation - on a priority basis for the 2018 Operating Budget - to enable 24-hour-a-day Park Ranger patrols at all Vancouver parks impacted by the significant challenges of drug use and garbage, as well as additional funding to maintain the cleanliness and safety of impacted Vancouver parks on an ongoing basis;
- B. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation directs Park Board staff to draft a budget, for submission to Vancouver City Council and the City of Vancouver, outlining the Operating Budget funding necessary to enable 24-hour-a-day Park Ranger patrols as well as the funding necessary to maintain the cleanliness and safety of all Vancouver parks impacted by the significant challenges arising from drug use and garbage; and
- C. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation directs Park Board staff to continue to liaise with their City of Vancouver staff counterparts to explore ways in which the Park Board can assist in efforts to locate appropriate housing and support for those struggling with mental health and addiction challenges.

REFERRED