



Expanding the Alcohol in Parks Program & Making it Permanent and Year Round

Excerpted from Minutes December 5, 2022

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MOVED by Commissioner Viridi
SECONDED by Commissioner Bastyovanszky

WHEREAS:

1. In December 2018, the Vancouver Park Board directed Staff to develop a pilot program to allow the responsible consumption of alcohol in select parks. The purpose of the pilot was to understand how the public consumed alcohol in parks, the impact on the community, and the required facilities;
2. The initial pilot ran from July to October 2021 in 22 Vancouver parks that matched established site selection criteria, followed by a public engagement process to understand how the public felt about drinking in parks and what lessons had been learned through the pilot. By all accounts, the pilot was well received by the public and was deemed to be a success;
3. In December 2021, Staff officially reported back to the Park Board with data and key findings from the 2021 pilot. The staff report noted public behaviour was largely respectful and non-problematic in the select parks during the times that park Rangers were on-site and monitoring, and 86% of those surveyed were supportive of the responsible consumption of alcohol in parks. Vancouver Coastal Health likewise found no significant difference in the number of alcohol-related ER visits, and VPD data showed no increase in the number of alcohol-related calls. The public was highly supportive of continuing the program, with most people having a positive experience of it;
4. In February 2022, Park Board directed staff to initiate a second alcohol in parks pilot program for 2022, with consideration given to the lessons learned during the 2021 pilot;
5. In May 2022, Park Board officially approved the 2022 pilot program for the same 22 park sites as 2021, with several improvements such as clarifying the designated drinking areas in the selected parks and, in some parks, expanding the boundaries. The 2022 pilot ran from June 3 to October 16, 2022 with no apparent problems or significant issues;
6. Park Board staff are expected to report back on the 2022 alcohol in parks pilot program, nominally before the end of the 2022 or at the latest Q1 2023;
7. A review of the City's park inventory database indicates that there are approximately 70+ parks around the City with existing washroom facilities that may support the expansion of the alcohol in parks program, but which may require further review by staff in relation to site selection criteria;
8. The experiences and findings from the 2021 and 2022 alcohol in parks pilot programs demonstrate that responsible consumption of alcohol in Vancouver parks is not only popular but also without significant problems, incidents, and/or issues.



THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to initiate a process to make the Alcohol in Parks program permanent and year round as of the beginning of Q2 of 2023 in the 22 parks that were part of the 2021 and 2022 alcohol in parks pilot programs.
- B. THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct to staff to prepare a list of other Vancouver parks where the potential to expand the alcohol in parks program exists based on the presence of, but not limited to, appropriate washroom and waste facilities.
- C. THAT staff be directed to report back to the Board on or before the end of Q1 of 2023 with a plan to pilot the responsible consumption of alcohol on an appropriate Vancouver beach or beaches where adequate facilities exist to support such a beach pilot program.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY