



REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 11, 2023

A Regular meeting of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation was held on Monday, December 11, 2023, at 8:36 pm, in the Boardroom at the Park Board Office.

PRESENT:

Commissioner Scott Jensen, Chair
Commissioner Brennan Bastyovanszky, Vice Chair
Commissioner Laura Christensen
Commissioner Tom Digby
Commissioner Angela Haer
Commissioner Marie-Claire Howard
Commissioner Jas Viridi

GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE:

Steve Jackson, General Manager
Denise Swanston, Acting Manager, Board Relations & Meeting Clerk
Jessica Kulchyski, Board Support and Meeting Assistant
Victoria Tyers, Board Support and Meeting Assistant & Meeting Clerk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair acknowledged that the meeting is taking place on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. The meeting is being held on the land respectfully and with the knowledge that there must be continued acknowledgement of the history of injustice toward Indigenous peoples. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is committed to supporting truth and reconciliation, and to use this opportunity to amplify local First Nations voices and culture through our work in community.

As outgoing Chair, Commissioner Jensen acknowledged he is a member of the BC Metis Nation and has felt to proud to serve as the first Indigenous person to sit as Chair of the Vancouver Park Board, and hopes to have inspired other Indigenous people to rise up through politics in Vancouver and to advocate and continue to work towards the goals of reconciliation and decolonization.

IN CAMERA MEETING

MOVED by Commissioner Digby
SECONDED by Commissioner Haer

THAT the Board will go into meetings prior to the next Regular Board Meeting, which are closed to the public, pursuant to Section 165.2(1) of the *Vancouver Charter*, to discuss matters related to paragraphs:

(e) the acquisition, disposition or expropriation of land or improvements, if the Council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the city;

(i) the receipt of advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose;

(j) information that is prohibited, or information that if it were presented in a document would be prohibited, from disclosure under section 21 [disclosure harmful to business interests of a third party] of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;

(k) negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of an activity, work or facility that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of the Council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the city if they were held in public.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Abstained: Commissioners Howard and Virdi

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Special and Regular Board Meetings – November 27, 2023

MOVED by Commissioner Digby

SECONDED by Commissioner Bastyovanszky

THAT the Minutes of the Special Board meeting of November 27, 2023, be approved;

FURTHER THAT the Regular Board meeting of November 27, 2023, be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair highlighted the participation of Commissioners at Park Board events since the previous Board meeting on November 27, 2023:

- Commissioners Virdi and Howard attended the proclamation to declare December 7 Pacific Autism Family Network Day in Vancouver.
- Commissioner Virdi attended the proclamation to declare December 12 Christine Sinclair Day in Vancouver, and throughout B.C.
- Commissioners attended the Canada Women's game against the Australian National Team, which celebrated the final match played by Christine Sinclair.
- Commissioners attended the VIP Night for Bright Nights in Stanley Park in support for the BC Fire Fighters Burn Fund.
- Chair Jensen attended the Vancouver Warriors Home Opener at Rogers Arena.

COMMUNICATIONS

No communication related to the meeting agenda was received.

* * * * *

Motion to Suspend the Rules

MOVED by Commissioner Digby
SECONDED by Commissioner Jensen

THAT the Board Vary the Agenda to deal with Other Business in order to consider a matter of Urgent Business, before proceeding with the remainder of the agenda.

LOST NOT HAVING RECEIVED
THE REQUIRED 2/3 MAJORITY

In favour: Commissioners Bastyovanszky, Christensen, Digby and Jensen
Opposed: Commissioners Haer, Howard and Virdi

* * * * *

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Report of the Board Committee – December 11, 2023

The Board considered the report containing recommendations and actions taken by the Board Committee. Its items of business included:

1. Water Priority Action Plan and Water Features Update

MOVED by Commissioner Christensen
SECONDED by Commissioner Howard

THAT the Board approve the recommendations and actions taken by the Board Committee at its meeting of December 11, 2023, as contained in item 1.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DEFERRED ITEMS

At the Board meeting on November 27, 2023, the following Member's Motion was deferred to the Board meeting on December 11, 2023, as the intended mover of the motion was absent due to illness.

1. Member's Motion: Beach Chair & Umbrella Rental Service

MOVED by Commissioner Haer
SECONDED by Commissioner Howard

WHEREAS:

1. Congruent with the Vancouver Park Board's interest in further activating its parks and beaches, providing value-added services for residents and visitors, and pursuing strategic and new revenue streams to support Vancouver's vast and globally recognized park system, a beach chair and umbrella rental service provides beach goers with convenient access to experience enhancing and sun protecting beach gear. Such services promote sustainability by enabling families, seniors, students and others to walk, bike or take transit to our local beaches (thereby reducing car dependency) while still having access to equipment needed to safely and conveniently enjoy our natural amenities;
2. Beach chair and umbrella rental services are available at beaches worldwide;
3. They make beaches and parks more inviting and enhance resident and visitor experiences by:
 - Providing a valued service (for seniors, families, tourists, and/or other individuals that are not able to bring or supply their own beach equipment).
 - Enhancing convenience and overall visitor satisfaction.
 - Delivering additional sun protection options.
 - Encouraging families to use different modes of travel while still being able to have access to valued beach equipment;
4. As Vancouver continues to densify, many residents have less space available for storage of seasonal/recreational equipment; as a result, rental services (such as beach chairs and umbrellas) support the growing and increasingly important sharing economy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to prepare and issue a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) seeking proposals from qualified vendors interested in offering a seasonal beach chair and umbrella rental service and additional equipment i.e. paddle board, canoe, water equipment etc.
- B. THAT staff report back to the Vancouver Park Board with viable vendor options by the end of Q1 2024.

LOST

In favour: Commissioners Haer, Howard and Viridi

Opposed: Commissioners Bastyovanszky, Christensen, Digby and Jensen

STAFF REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

1. Sunset Engagement – Update

The Director of Planning and Park Development introduced the item, and the Planner, along with the Planning Analyst, provided an update on the Sunset Neighbourhood Engagement.

Following the presentation, staff responded to questions related to:

- The presence of translators onsite for pop-up engagement activities
- Engagement and reception with the community
- Steps taken to ensure adequate cultural support
- Percentage of engagement undertaken through organized support

2. Kitsilano Outdoor Pool – Update

The Director of Recreation Services presented the item, and along with the Associate Director of Facilities Planning with the City of Vancouver, provided an update on the status of the Kitsilano Outdoor Pool.

Following the presentation, staff responded to questions related to:

- The relationship between the City of Vancouver and the Park Board on maintenance and facility renewals
- Hourly water loss figures

3. General Manager’s Report

Members of the Park Board Leadership Team presented the General Manager’s Report, highlighting:

- Stanley Park Train is back online for Bright Nights at Stanley Park, following a successful inspection by Technical Safety BC on November 27, 2023. Bright Nights was extended an additional week to account for the demand and the event will run from November 30, 2023 to January 6, 2024 from 4:00pm – 10:00pm
- Upcoming Council business related to or impacting parks and recreation:
 - Report titled “Audit of Park Board Revenue Management”
 - Motion titled “Amendments to the Vancouver Charter”

MEMBERS’ MOTIONS

1. Creating Vancouver’s First Inclusive and Accessible Sensory Park for Children

REFERRAL MOVED by Commissioner Viridi
SECONDED by Commissioner Howard

THAT the following motion titled “Creating Vancouver’s First Inclusive and Accessible Sensory Park for Children” be referred to the Committee Meeting of January 22, 2024, in order to hear from speakers, followed by debate and decision.

WHEREAS:

1. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is dedicated to creating recreational spaces that are inclusive, safe, and accessible to all residents, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds;
2. On June 20, 2018, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-81, An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada (the Accessible Canada Act) in Parliament. The Accessible Canada Act received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019, and came into force on July 11, 2019;
3. The purpose of the Accessible Canada Act is to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040. This involves identifying, removing and preventing barriers in federal jurisdiction in a number of priority areas including the built environment (buildings and public spaces) and the design and delivery of public programs and services;
4. In June 2021, the province's Accessible British Columbia Act became law. It provides a framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility and represents an important step toward making B.C. a more accessible and inclusive province that supports people with disabilities to meaningfully participate in their communities;
5. The Park Board is subject to the requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act and the Accessible Canada Act and fully embraces the obligations outlined in legislation and remains resolute in its efforts to achieve inclusivity and accessibility in all aspects of Park Board jurisdiction;
6. With the exception of the Kitsilano Beach Park playground, which was designed for access and inclusion in 2010-2011, and included accommodations to address the needs of neurodiverse children (consistent with the understanding of these needs at the time), and the Douglas Park Playground, which was designed for children with neurodiverse needs (2018-19), there are no parks in Vancouver that meet the standard of a fully inclusive and accessible sensory park for children;
7. Children with mobility and other challenges deserve equal opportunities to enjoy sensory-rich recreational activities in Vancouver parks and recreation facilities and to connect with their peers in an accessible environment;
8. Children who are neurodiverse, particularly those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, often require specialized sensory-friendly environments where they can comfortably engage their senses, explore, and interact, thereby fostering their social, cognitive, and emotional development. There is a known deficiency of these specialized spaces within Vancouver parks and recreation facilities;
9. An Inclusive and Accessible Sensory Park for Children requires specific elements and accommodations such as:
 - i. sensory-rich play zones that stimulate various senses, including touch, sight, sound, and smell, while ensuring comfort and sensory-friendly experiences for neurodiverse children, particularly those with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- ii. inclusive and accessible sensory equipment designed to be usable by children of all abilities, including those in wheelchairs.
 - iii. accessible pathways, ramps, and surfacing to ensure safe and easy mobility for children with mobility challenges.
10. Given the growing demand and recognition of the need for inclusive and accessible spaces in our city, an urgent need therefore exists to create recreational environments that can cater to the diverse needs of our community, notably the needs of neurodiverse children, children with autism, and those who use wheelchairs;
11. The creation of a flagship accessible and inclusive sensory park in Vancouver, one that would uniquely cater to the needs of neurodiverse children, children with autism, and those who use wheelchairs, would represent a monumental step toward providing the kind of equitable recreational spaces for all residents in alignment with important legislative steps taken by the federal and provincial governments and reflective of the Park Board's goal to accomplish various inclusivity and accessibility objectives; and
12. The establishment of Vancouver's first fully accessible and inclusive sensory park would send a strong signal of the Park Board's unwavering commitment to creating a better, more accessible and more inclusive future for all residents.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation commit to the planning, development, and construction of Vancouver's first inclusive and accessible sensory park, designed to accommodate the unique needs and preferences of neurodiverse children, those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and those with mobility challenges.
- B. THAT the sensory park's design shall accommodate and prioritize, but not be limited to, the following features in accordance with best design practices:
- i. Sensory-rich play zones that stimulate various senses, including touch, sight, sound, and smell, while ensuring comfort and sensory-friendly experiences for children, particularly children with autism.
 - ii. Inclusive and accessible sensory equipment and elements designed to be usable by children of all abilities, including those in wheelchairs.
 - iii. Accessible pathways, ramps, and surfacing to ensure safe and easy mobility for children with mobility challenges.
- C. THAT staff be directed to identify and recommend an optimal location for an inclusive and accessible sensory park, taking into account existing parks that may be up for renewal and/or new park development opportunities that may arise or be currently contemplated.

- D. THAT staff be directed to explore a diversity of funding sources, including but not limited to the Park Board and City capital budgets, government grants, private donations, corporate partnerships, and community fundraising, in order to secure the necessary financial resources for this project.
- E. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and Park Board staff shall actively seek community and key stakeholder input on the vision outlined in this motion for an inclusive and accessible sensory park project, including feedback from parents, caregivers, and organizations that represent children with autism such as the Pacific Autism Family Network (PAFN), and those with mobility challenges, to ensure that the sensory park's design is inclusive and responsive to the community's needs;
- FURTHER THAT staff be directed to engage with, and potentially partner with, relevant organizations that specialize in designing inclusive and accessible sensory experiences to facilitate the successful implementation of this flagship project.
- F. THAT staff be directed to update the Board, the public, and all relevant stakeholders on the progress of the project on a regular basis and not less than once per year, to see their ongoing input and feedback throughout the project development process.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

* * * * *

Motion to Extend

MOVED by Commissioner Jensen
SECONDED by Commissioner Digby

THAT the meeting extend past 10:00 pm in order to complete the business on the agenda.

LOST NOT HAVING RECEIVED
THE REQUIRED 2/3 MAJORITY

In favour: Commissioners Bastovanszky, Christensen, Digby and Jensen
Opposed: Commissioners Haer, Howard and Virdi

* * * * *

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Reaffirming Park Board Independence – Save the Park Board

Commissioner Bastovanszky introduced a motion as Urgent Business titled “Reaffirming Park Board Independence – Save the Park Board”.

The Chair permitted the motion to continue as urgent business as it relates to a financial and legal matter of significance to the Board.

* * * * *

At this point in the proceedings, Commissioner Viridi raised a Point of Order regarding the requirements for permitting an item as urgent business.

The Meeting Clerk advised that per section 7.8 of the Procedure By-law, it is within the purview of the Chair to permit an item as urgent business.

* * * * *

Commissioner Bastyovanszky responded to questions related to the motion. Subsequently, it was,

MOVED by Commissioner Bastyovanszky
SECONDED by Commissioner Jensen

WHEREAS

1. The Vancouver Park Board was formed in 1888 prior to the opening of Vancouver's first park, Stanley Park;
2. Shortly afterwards, in 1890, City Council passed city by-law number 96 giving a biannually elected board of four commissioners and the new Board held its first meeting on May 28, 1890. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation ("Park Board"), is now governed by the Vancouver Charter, a provincial statute enacted in 1953 that incorporates the City of Vancouver;
3. The mission and mandate 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;
4. The Park Board looks after 250 public parks and beaches, including Stanley Park, VanDusen Botanical Garden, Bloedel Conservatory, and a large public recreation system of 24 community centres, swimming pools, rinks and arenas, sport playing fields, playgrounds, fitness centres, three championship golf courses, street trees, and marinas, among other services and facilities;
5. Vancouver's parks, recreation, and cultural assets are prized by Vancouverites and visitors alike and must be protected, maintained, and preserved sustainably and in good working order for future generations. The Park Board has always played a key role in protecting our parks from unscrupulous development;
6. On November 27, 2023, the Board received a report from the Auditor General titled "Park Board Revenue Management", and the Board unanimously endorsed the report's six recommendations; and

7. On December 6, 2023, the Mayor of Vancouver, Ken Sim, issued a press release that he will be bringing a motion forward on December 23, 2023, asking the Province to remove the requirement for an elected Park Board under the Vancouver Charter, and transfer the powers of the Board to City Council.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the duly elected Commissioners reaffirm their oath of office.
- B. THAT the Board reaffirms its position as an independently elected Board with a mandate to provide, preserve, and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit all people, communities, and the environment.
- C. THAT the Board directs staff to continue with all planning projects, and not to re-prioritize any work in light of the Mayor's motion.
- D. THAT the Board directs staff to not allocate any resources towards a transition working group.
- E. THAT the Board directs staff to continue to implement improvements pursuant to the recent Auditor General Report, and to provide an initial report back in Q2 2024 on steps taken and progress made.
- F. THAT if the motion proposed by the Mayor is passed by City Council, that the Board directs the Chair to send a letter on behalf of the Board to David Eby, Premier, and Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs, that (1) reaffirms the Board's role as an independent elected body, (2) makes clear that the current Board of Parks and Recreation were not consulted prior to the Mayor's motion, and requesting consultation and a meeting with the Premier prior to a decision, and (3) states that the current Board of Parks and Recreation do not support removing the requirement for an elected Park Board.

CARRIED

In favour: Commissioners Bastovanszky, Christensen, Digby and Jensen

Opposed: Commissioners Haer, Howard and Viridi

ENQUIRIES

1. None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The Board adjourned at 9:59 pm.

* * * * *

Steve Jackson
General Manager

Commissioner Scott Jensen
Chair