

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation
Services & Budgets Committee Meeting
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on
Tuesday, May 26, 2009**

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners

Loretta Woodcock, Chair
Constance Barnes, Vice Chair
Aaron Jasper
Ian Robertson

Park Board Staff

Susan Mundick	General Manager
Peter Kuran	Director, Stanley District
Meg Elliott	Senior Business Analyst
Philip Josephs	Manager, Revenue Services & Marinas
Tilo Driessen	Park Planner, Planning and Research
Shala Hay	Recorder

Guests

Michael Gerstner, Blue Glacier Water

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm, with the following Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of April 28, 2009
2. Bottled Water – Council Motion
3. Strategic Planning – City Process/PB Process
4. 2009 Operating Budget – April Statement

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Services & Budgets Committee held on Tuesday, April 28, 2009, were adopted as circulated.

2. Bottled Water – Council Motion

Staff presented a report relating to Council's Motion on Bottled Water. Coming out of the Council's report of April 23, 2009, on 'Bottled Water in Civic Facilities', three resolutions were put forward for the Park Board's consideration. The first, Resolution A, was already implemented by the Park Board about a year ago with the elimination of the

use of bottled water; filtered tap water is now used exclusively in the Park Board offices. Resolution B, relates to incorporating access to municipal drinking water into new designs and renovations undertaken by the Park Board. The third, Resolution C, is an initiative funded by the City to provide year-round access to municipal drinking water in outdoor public spaces.

The elimination of bottled water sales in Park Board facilities would result in a reduction in net revenue of approximately \$250,000 (inclusive of the loss in revenue from Coca Cola sponsorship, the agreement with Coca Cola will expire in 2016). This revenue loss was not accounted for in the operating budget, and would have to be compensated for. There are however, no clauses in the lease agreements with restaurants and some concession stands that would allow the Board to solicit the elimination of bottled water sales. Some of these agreements will expire in ten to twelve years.

There are currently approximately 300 drinking fountains in our facilities. Each fountain cost on average \$15,000 to purchase and install. This figure does not include maintenance costs which can occur frequently and are usually substantial. The \$35,000 provided by the City, as per resolution C, would only cover two of these fountains at this price.

Staff also noted that negative perceptions associated with public drinking fountains still need to be addressed, in order for these resolutions to be successful.

Staff recommended that no further action be taken by the Board regarding the Council's report, and that bottled water continue to be sold at facilities, to offer patrons a choice of beverages.

Discussion:

The committee recommended that staff consider the ability to fill up water bottles when looking at design concepts for sinks and fountains. Staff stated that this has been incorporated in recent designs, where taps have been installed on counters for filling water bottles at the rinks. Staff further stated that no funds have been allocated for this in the current budget and any consideration may have to be applied to future capital budgets.

The Committee questioned what would be done to inform the public, and especially visitors and tourists, that our water is safe. Staff stated that a campaign would have to be put in place for this; however it would be difficult to change individual mindsets. A blitz with Metro Vancouver could also be used to promote the municipal drinking water as one of the best in the world, with the opening of the new Seymour Reservoir Filtration System.

A member of the Committee inquired into the recyclability of water bottles. Staff stated that these bottles are very recyclable and there is approximately a 95% recovery rate. Staff further stated that bottle recycling was not the main concern for the Park Board. The greater focus should be on providing the public with readily accessible healthy choices as an alternative to carbonated beverages.

The Committee asked whether these plans would be included in the Grandview Park consultation. Staff stated that it can be included and that public consultation is needed on these proposals. Staff agreed that Grandview Park would be a good place to start with these considerations.

The Committee questioned whether resolution B and C will be funded by the City's budget. Staff confirmed that this is the case.

The following delegation requested to speak to the Committee:

- Michael Gerstner, Blue Glacier Water

The following is a summary of the comments provided by the foregoing delegation:

- Blue Glacier Water (BGW) provides an alternative to regular bottled water
- Their bottles are 100% corn based, but can also be produced from other vegetables
- The product is completely biodegradable within 27 days
- The labels and ink are also biodegradable and they are currently working on producing a biodegradable cap, which will make the entire package 100% biodegradable
- The US Government declared this product the first option in the purchase of bottled water
- In about three weeks they will launch the first biodegradable bottled water in Canada
- The main purpose of the presentation was to inform the Committee that there is an environmentally friendly alternative
- BGW is responsible for filling the bottles with water for sale, but does not manufacture the bottles

Discussion:

The Committee asked whether the product is certified in the United States. The delegation confirmed that it is. The Committee further inquired into whether large beverage companies, such as Coca Cola, are looking towards purchasing the product. The delegation stated that Coca Cola has now incorporated a chemical which makes their bottles degradable. At the moment the product presented by BGW is quite new and the price is relatively high; however as the product becomes more popular and consumers become aware of it, the demand would increase, and the cost will decline. Once someone takes the initiative as the pioneer, they believe the larger firms would follow.

The Committee asked whether the product was presented to the City. The delegation stated that they are in the process of arranging an appointment with the City.

The Committee inquired whether the corn used in the production is grown specifically for this purpose. The delegation stated that bi-products, such as husks, are used rather than actual corn.

The Committee reverted to its discussion on the staff report. It was suggested that staff consider the cost implications of incorporating drinking fountains in the designs of new facilities and upgrades. This would also be given priority in the next Capital Budget.

The Committee suggested the idea of selling metal water bottles at concession stands, as a preliminary step in promoting these resolutions. A message can be included in the vessel endorsing the consumption of municipal water, to assist in changing the public's mindset. Staff stated that they are working on a similar product to be primarily sold at the 'Pitch & Putt' golf courses. Research has however found that people generally do not like carrying along excess items, especially while active.

The Committee suggested that community centres need to have vending machines stock healthier options. They could start off by offering more options in the machines. The Committee inquired into whether some negotiation could be made with Coca Cola, rather than waiting on the expiration of the contract in 2016. Staff stated that they meet with Coca Cola at the end of each year, to review the year's performance, and trends indicate that consumers are now demanding healthier options.

The Committee concurred with staff's recommendation that bottled water sales should not be eliminated at the moment. The Committee requested staff to develop a water fountain strategy that would be brought back to the Committee. The strategy would include the cost implications of water fountains on the budget. This would relate to any new projects or upgrades that are scheduled in the current plan and would look at whether these costs can be covered by the existing budget. It would also include longer-term projects that would apply to subsequent capital budgets.

The Committee asked what would be an appropriate timeline for submitting this strategy. Staff stated that they could start working on this after the Olympics in 2010 and bring it before the Committee for consideration in 2011. Gap analysis would also be incorporated to look at areas where there is an existing need for more fountains, as well as, which ones are not being utilized. The feasibility of renovating existing fountains would also be included in this analysis.

Staff will also look into collaborating with the Water District on their marketing project to promote municipal drinking water, which is scheduled to commence in July of this year.

3. Strategic Planning – City Process/PB Process

Staff reported to the Committee on the various options available for developing a strategic plan and the common components of these plans, for feedback on the type of plan preferred by the Board. The monitoring process was noted as an important aspect of the plan, to ensure that performance is on track. The Park Board's first official strategic plan was composed ten years ago and the organisation's mission was developed at that time. Some of the key directions of that plan are still being utilized today. This plan was modified in 2005 to develop the second official plan, which is now in operation and will expire in 2010. Although the Board has autonomy over the format, it was noted that the new City Manager has adopted a Corporate Business Plan rather than a Strategic Plan,

and the Park Board's plan should be aligned with the City's plan. The difference between the two types is that the Corporate Business Plan gathers data that exists across various areas and amalgamates it into one document, rather than placing an emphasis on feedback and new data.

Discussion:

The Committee asked whether there is money in the budget to cover the cost of developing the plan. Staff stated that there is an area for 'Planning Studies' in the budget that can be utilized, about \$25,000-\$30,000 can be allocated towards this. Consultancy may be needed for some areas and some of the work can be done by staff. The final cost will depend on the depth of information and the level of input requested by the Board.

The Committee suggested a ten year plan with a five year review. The plan should not be too prescriptive, allowing for flexibility and growth. It should also be easy for the public to comprehend.

The Committee suggested that consultancy be carried out on the four quadrants of the city to gauge commonalities in public opinion. More sophisticated measures should be considered to gather general public feedback, rather than special interest groups. Input from staff should also be included.

Staff would commence working on the plan and look towards bringing a draft before the Board in one year's time, for completion in the fall of 2010. Staff will put together a Request For Proposal (RFP) to obtain an estimate of the cost. The RFP would be brought to the Committee this fall to determine if it is in line with what is required. Staff also requested that a few representatives from the Board work with them on this project.

4. 2009 Operating Budget – April Statement

Staff presented the Operating Statement for April 2009. Revenue has increased by \$0.6 million and expenditure has decreased by \$0.2 million, in comparison to last year. Overall, there was a decrease of \$0.8 million in net expenditure (before inflation), when compared to April 2008. A savings of \$2.6 million has to be achieved by the end of the year. Marinas, Leases & Other, Destination Parks, and Neighbourhood Parks/Street trees/Nursery/Building Maintenance/Sanitation are areas for improvement in revenue. Although the marina fees were increased by 4% there was only a 2% increase in revenue, which may be attributable to a decrease in usage. The increase in Recreation revenue was due to increased marketing. The 87% increase in Pitch & Putt revenue may be as a result of the down time that occurred in April 2008 due to the poor turf condition following the 2007 work stoppage.

Past trends indicate that the majority of revenue (48% in 2008) is generated between the months of May - August. The next coming months are critical in meeting the target. If the current trend in revenue continues the target should be achieved. Staff recommended that there continue to be close monitoring of the budget.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

The Services and Budgets Committee Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, July 14th, 2009, was cancelled due to the lack of availability of Committee members on this date.

Anita Ho, Director,
Corporate Services

Commissioner Loretta Woodcock,
Chair