

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation
Services & Budgets Committee Meeting
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on
Tuesday, June 16, 2009**

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners

Loretta Woodcock, Chair
Aaron Jasper
Ian Robertson

Park Board Staff

Anita Ho	Director of Corporate Services
Thomas Soulliere	Manager of Recreation Services Stanley District
Meg Elliott	Senior Business Analyst
Daisy Chin	Recreation Services Co-coordinator-Special Events and Filming
Hart Nijjar	Recorder

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm, with the following Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes of May 26, 2009
2. Kits Fest – Beer Garden
3. Special Events/Fees Charges
4. 2009 Operating Budget –May update
5. Steve Nash Soccer Charity Event – Beer Garden

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Services & Budgets Committee held on Tuesday, May 26, 2009, were adopted as circulated.

2. Kits Fest – Beer Garden

Staff brought a request forward for the use of Kits Beach for Kits Fest from Aug 14-16. The event is organised by the Metro Vancouver Basketball Foundation, which is a non-profit association. The 2.5 day sports tournament will incorporate a basketball tournament, volleyball tournament, and tennis tournament.

The Foundation is seeking a private special occasion's licence for a private VIP/Athletes only area with a capacity of 250-300 people, operating Saturday August 15 and Sunday

August 16 from 12pm-8pm for the service of beer and wine only as well as service of food by the Watermark Restaurant.

Issues presented by staff included concern about complaints from the Kits Point Residents association, the noise created by the event, and increased traffic. Measures have been taken to address these concerns. The event has been scaled back from its original size, and organizers have also been asked to manage the sound levels at the event. Furthermore, staff are working with organizers on a traffic and communication plan.

Staff recommended that a permit be approved for a 250 person beer garden and that sound levels be monitored by city staff.

The following delegation was presented to the Committee to answer any questions or address concerns of the Committee:

Howard Kelsey (Co-chair of Metro Vancouver Basketball Association), David Barnett (Watermark), Christine Bradstock (Initiative for Healthy Living).

Discussion:

The Committee asked what measures had been taken in regards to security. Staff responded that preliminary discussions have taken place and the police are comfortable with the event, as other similar events have already taken place at Kits Beach.

The Committee inquired about what mechanisms would be in place to address concerns from the public regarding event noise, and how they would be relayed to the event organizers. Staff responded that a decibel reader would be used during the event to monitor sound levels to ensure noise levels are in compliance with the law.

The Committee inquired whether information could be provided to the surrounding neighbourhood about the event and staff confirmed that they would speak with organizers about arranging for distribution of pamphlets.

The Committee asked whether the public would know who to phone if they were concerned about the event and staff replied that they could work with Mr. Kelsey to ensure that information would be provided to the surrounding area and the public would be aware of police support for the event.

The Committee endorsed the event being presented to the Board in July for approval.

3. Special Events/ Fees Changes

Staff presented information on a proposal for changes to the fee structure for special events.

A wide range of events receive permits, with 600 permits being given out last year. The majority of events are organized by non-profit associations and are generally open to the public, but private event permits are also given out. Permits are also given out for filming and photography within Vancouver parks, with 200 such permits being given out last year.

The current fee structure only has four rate options: simple, complex, festival, and runs and walks. The lack of detail in this fee structure leaves it open to interpretation and can result in lengthy discussions with event organizers.

The following objectives were outlined for the process of creating a new fee structure: a simple and clear fee structure, rates comparable to those in other cities, engagement of current event organizers in the process, and consideration of the unique nature of multi-day events. The proposed fee structure meets all but the last objective.

The proposed fee structure has a fee matrix that is simple and clear for staff and users to understand. It has built in variables for event type and size, making application of fees quicker and more consistent. Event types include charity/community, community festivals, charity athletic (run, walk), and private commercial. Five size levels have been created, and each event type has a different cost according to the size of the event. The new fee structure will also incorporate a \$25 application fee that can be used toward the permit cost. The fee has been proposed to reduce the number of applicants who do not subsequently pursue their request.

A survey was emailed to current customers in late 2008 to receive their input on the proposed fee schedule and a roundtable discussion with them took place in March 2009. Further investigation and discussion is still required regarding multi day events and will be addressed later in this year.

It is estimated that the proposed change in fee structure will generate \$25,000 of gross annual revenue. The proposed implementation period for the fee structure is September 2009 to allow time for organizers to adjust to the change.

In certain cases, past fee rates have not kept in line with current market rates. As such, prices have increased or decreased to fall in line with market rates. Private/commercial events will see some of the largest increases in rates, but discussion with stakeholders and the ability of these types of events to recover costs has lead staff to believe that the increase in cost is reasonable.

The filming permit fee schedule did not require much change to the categories or fees. There is a simple rate or a complex rate depending on the type of photography and equipment used. The fee is per day.

Discussion

The Committee asked whether staff have received feedback on the fees. Staff replied that stakeholders have been notified and meetings with them took place. However, not much interest was shown, likely due to the completeness of the proposal.

The Committee asked whether charities accept the proposed change of \$800 to \$1000 for walks and runs, when in the past they have only been charged \$428. Staff responded that events that will be charged those sums will be very large scale. Stakeholders are not pleased with the increase, but recognize that although the size of events has increased, the fee has not gone up accordingly. The Committee inquired whether an entrance fee is charged at these types of events or what other methods charity organizations have to recoup the permit fee. Staff responded that there are often concessions set up at the events and these types of organizations also receive grants.

The Committee asked how often a market scan would take place in the future. Staff noted that market scans will have to take place more frequently to judge if the fee schedule is in line with market prices. Ideally, a scan would occur yearly.

The Committee expressed concern about the sudden increase in rates for certain event types, but staff assured the Committee that the fee schedule would be gradually implemented. The fee schedule will not be implemented until September 2009, and all events already booked will pay for permits according to the old fee schedule.

The Committee supported the staff proposal.

4. 2009 Operating Budget – May Update

Staff presented the Operating Statement for May 2009. Not including inflation, revenue has increased by \$0.9 million while expenses have increased by \$0.7 million. Overall, there has been a \$0.2 million decrease in net expenditure (once inflation is considered), when compared to May 2008. \$13.1 million in revenue was generated to the end of May 2009, resulting in 7% more revenue than the same period in 2008. The smallest gains in revenue came from golf and marinas, while neighbourhood parks/street trees and leases experienced a decrease in actual revenue as compared to May 2008. Areas showing the greatest gains in revenue were pitch & putts, recreation, and destination parks. In terms of expenditures, to the end of May 2009 the Board spent \$40.2 million as compared to \$39.5 million for the same period in 2008. The increase in expenditure was higher than anticipated, partially because supply and expense costs have increased.

In summary, revenues have increased compared to 2008, but certain areas have shown decreases. As most revenue is generated in the summer season, there is time for revenue to increase and meet targets. Supply and expense costs have increased and will be monitored. Staff are taking steps to meet expense targets by year end.

Discussion

The Committee would like to see additional details on where costs have increased for marinas and neighbourhood parks when the report is brought to the Board.

The Committee inquired as to why parking expenditure has decreased. Staff will follow up on this request, and the Committee recommended that this information be available when the statement is presented to the Board.

5. Steve Nash Soccer Charity Event – Beer Garden

Staff presented information on the Steve Nash soccer charity event. The event would take place on September 19, 2009, at David Lam Park and would consist of an 8 aside soccer match. Organizers have requested a permit for a gated admission event. There would also be a beer garden. Expected attendance is 5000.

The main concern brought up by staff was that event details have changed suddenly and significantly since the initial proposal. Initially the event would have allowed for free public access, but now organizers have requested permission for a gated/ticketed event, which would deny the general public access and require payment for entry. Set-up for the event would have to take place one to two days prior to the event, and this combined with lack of public access to the event is problematic. The large size of the event may also require the park to close, but there has been a lack of public consultation regarding a potential closure and time constraints may not allow for one to happen. Further, noise, parking, and traffic presented additional concerns for staff.

Staff had taken into consideration that the tournament is a high profile event and has taken place in other cities. However, David Lam Park can not be gated without public consultation, so at the time of the Committee meeting, staff did not recommend the event, unless organizers were to re-think certain aspects of the tournament.

Discussion

The Committee asked whether any other facilities could be used for the event. Staff said that they had suggested other locations, but the organizers would like to have the event downtown.

The Committee inquired as to whether event organizers had been informed that their event may not be approved. Staff replied that event organizers only recently decided to make the event gated, and they may not have realized the implications the change would have on the possibility of receiving a permit.

The Committee supported staff's recommendation to not support the event, based on the current proposal, but would like staff to look into whether other locations could be used and whether the event could go back to its original proposal of being a non-gated, non-ticketed event.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Anita Ho, Director,
Corporate Services

Commissioner Loretta Woodcock,
Chair