

**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation
Planning & Environment Committee Meeting
Held at the Vancouver Park Board Office on
Thursday, April 08, 2010**

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners

Sarah Blyth, Chair
Stuart Mackinnon
Loretta Woodcock

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director, Planning & Operations
Peter Kuran	Acting General Manager
Philip Josephs	Co-Acting Director of Stanley District
Thomas Soulliere	Co-Acting Director of Stanley District
Liane McKenna	Director, Vancouver East District
Drew Gilchrist	Superintendent - Arboriculture North
Bill Stephen	Urban Forestry Technician
Hart Nijjar	Recorder

Delegations:

- Movana Ramor
- Patricia Thomson, President, Stanley Park Ecology Society
- Robyn Worcester, Stanley Park Ecology Society
- Howard Kelsey, Chairman, Canada One Foundation
- Julien Phipps, Co-founder, Kitsfest
- Tara McDonald, Executive Director, Vancouver Farmers Markets
- Judy Biluk
- Rebecca Haber
- Terry Kong
- Chris Chinfen
- Les Brotherston
- Wendy Pattenden, Canadian Sports Centre Pacific
- Lucinda Jagger, Canadian Sports Centre Pacific

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

1. Approval of Minutes of the February 04, 2010 Meeting
2. Street Tree Issue – 46th Avenue and George St
3. Report on the ‘Ecology of Stanley Park’
4. Special Event Permits
5. Memorial South Park Tennis Courts

6. Southeast False Creek Community Centre partnership opportunity with Canadian Sport Centre Pacific
7. Stanley Park Shuttle Operation

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Environment Committee held on Thursday, February 4th, 2010 were adopted as circulated.

2. Street Tree Issue – 46th Avenue and St. George St

Staff introduced Mrs. Movana Ramor who brought forward concerns regarding the linden trees in her neighbourhood. The linden trees are infested with aphids, which are insects that excrete honeydew, causing trees and their surroundings to become sticky.

Mrs. Ramor brought the issue to the attention of the committee because she believes that more action needs to be taken by the Board to address the infestation. In the past, crews have treated the infestation by spraying the trees with pesticide. This can be a costly way to address the problem, especially when crews spray the trees more than once a year. Mrs. Ramor proposed that the trees should be removed to address the infestation and problems associated with it.

The Committee thanked Mrs. Ramor for her comments.

Discussion

A Committee member asked staff what the duration of the aphid season is and Park Board policy regarding use of pesticides. The period of time that trees are infested by aphids depend upon the climate, but on average the infestation lasts approximately three months. Use of pesticides is governed by the Park Board's Integrated Pest Management Policy which outlines the process for dealing with pest problems in an environmentally-sound way. Under this policy, pesticides are not used unless absolutely necessary. Further, the Park Board has a policy against removing healthy trees.

Staff presented information on street tree pest management. Currently, there are approximately 138,000 street trees in Vancouver. Amongst these trees there are a few varieties of problem trees, called such because they face infestation issues. The linden tree is listed as one of these due to aphid infestation problems. Aphid infestations are the most common problem encountered by staff and the worst infestations occur on birch, tulips, maples, and linden. There are almost 10,000 linden trees in Vancouver and although aphids are a nuisance pest, they do not harm the trees themselves. Aphid infestations are closely monitored by staff and treated with ladybugs or insecticidal soap if necessary. Staff have been controlling aphids on the 400 to 600 blocks of E. 46th and the 6100 block of St. George since 1998. Future treatment will likely be required but if spraying is necessary staff will use equipment that will reduce overspray. Lastly, with the Mayor's recent Greenest City initiative and the ambitious goal of adding 150,000 trees to the city, staff is reluctant to encourage removal of healthy trees.

The committee asked staff what the cost of removing and replacing every tree considered to be a nuisance would be. Staff replied that approximately 12,000 street trees can be classified as nuisance trees and the cost to remove and replace them is \$750 to \$1,000 per tree.

A member of the Committee asked whether all linden trees invite aphid infestation, or whether certain varieties are more prone. Staff replied that most varieties of linden trees face infestation issues.

A Committee member asked staff what trees are being considered for planting as part of the Greenest City Initiative. Staff noted that all trees have positives and negatives associated with them, but an effort will be made to plant trees that are hearty and disease resistant. When the linden trees were planted on St. George Street in the 1980's, it was not anticipated that they would be infested by aphids.

The Committee noted that although the aphid infestation is a nuisance, it is only problematic for a small period of time and removing all healthy trees that face periods of infestation is not feasible. However, staff should be mindful of the infestation issues associated with linden trees when determining what varieties of trees to plant in the future.

The Committee thanked Mrs. Ramor for bringing this matter to its attention and asked staff to work with Mrs. Ramor's neighbourhood to mitigate aphid infestation impacts.

3. Report on the 'Ecology of Stanley Park'

Staff introduced Patricia Thomson and Robyn Worcester from the Stanley Park Ecology Society (SPES), who presented information on a report SPES authored entitled 'State of the Park Report for the Ecological Integrity of Stanley Park.' The purpose of the report is to establish a framework to assess the ecological integrity of Stanley Park, provide a description of what is occurring in the Park's major ecosystems and stressors that may impact them, and to identify gaps in ecological knowledge.

The methodology of the report is based on similar reports created for National Parks by Parks Canada and provides a biophysical inventory of the park as well as outlining environmental indicators that are used to assess the current and future state of the Park's ecological integrity. The biophysical inventory includes detailed information on the Park's species, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and processes, as well as stressors influencing the Ecological Integrity of the Park.

Environmental indicators were chosen based on their ability to meet the following criteria: provide information on ecosystem processes; based on reliable data; measurable; based on data for which monitoring systems are in place; defined by the boundaries of the ecosystem. Based on the indicators chosen, the report assesses the current state and anticipated trends of areas outlined in the biophysical inventory. In terms of climate and atmosphere, assessment indicates that the current state is fair and there is a declining trend due to climate change and decreasing air quality. The current state of terrestrial ecosystems is fair due to negative effects of the park's history and introduction of invasive plant species. However, the trend is improving because of

the Stanley Park Restoration Project and the Park Board's new Forest Management Plan. The state of aquatic ecosystems is on the decline and anticipated to stay that way due to decreasing water quality and invasive species. Lastly, the current state of native biodiversity is fair and projected to be stable.

Future recommendations that will guide SPES's conservation and education activities include gap filling initiatives and long-term monitoring programs. It is hoped that the report will be updated on a regular bases using measurable indicators. The report also makes suggestions regarding future directions and provides a list of literature that will serve as a sound basis for the successful ecological management of Stanley Park.

The Committee thanked Ms. Thomson and Ms. Worcester for their presentation and acknowledged the importance of the work they are doing. The public can obtain a copy of the report through the SPES website.

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked the delegation about the status of the western painted turtle which was indigenous to Beaver Lake. Ms. Worcester noted that this variety of turtle has not been documented in the lake for some time and the reason behind its disappearance is uncertain.

A member of the Committee asked staff how they believe the findings of the SPES report can be used in the Park Board's Forest Management Plan. Staff noted that the plan was recently adopted and staff liaised with the SPES when forming its contents. The plan will be revisited every five years and should the Board wish to pursue an overall management plan, the SPES report is a valuable resource.

The Committee asked staff to send the report to the Board for information and report by September on the ecological issues at Beaver Lake.

4. Special Event Permits

Staff presented information on three upcoming events per Park Board requirements that Board approval is required for major events not included on the annual Special Event Calendar and/or are in variance with one or more Park Board by-laws or guidelines.

First, the Vancouver International Soccer Festival must be relocated from David Lam Park to Andy Livingstone Park due to reconstruction. The event will take place from June 26 to 27 and two fields at the park will be divided to accommodate up to four matches at once. Organizers propose to close two tennis courts, one for a family style bistro and one for a private VIP licensed bistro for which a special occasion license is necessary. The licensed area will operate from 11:30 am to 9:00 pm. Moneys gained from sale of alcoholic beverages will go to the net cost of the event and charitable causes. Staff requested the Committee endorse its recommendation to the Board to approve the special occasion license request. Staff will monitor sound levels and ask organizers to distribute notification letters to the neighbourhood as well as post notification on the impacted tennis courts.

Second, organizers of Kitsfest at Kitsilano Beach Park have requested a capacity change. This is the second year for the event, which will host basketball, tennis, volleyball, and table tennis tournaments. Organizers have requested two special occasion licenses, one for a 250 person capacity bistro adjacent to the basketball courts (which is the same as their approved request last year) and one for a 150 capacity licensed bistro on the beach between the volleyball and paddle tennis courts. The licensed areas will operate from 12:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Event organizers will provide security and abide by all requirements. Proceeds from alcohol sales will help recoup costs associated with hosting the events. Staff requested the Committee endorse its recommendation to the Board to approve the special occasion license requests.

Third, the Trout Lake Farmer's Market must be relocated due to construction at the Trout Lake Community Centre. The market has operated for 13 years near the community centre, running on Saturdays from May to October. It is proposed that the market be moved to the north lot of the park while construction is ongoing. Notification has been sent to the neighbourhood and sport user groups. Concerns have been expressed regarding traffic and parking, as well as the impact the market may have on the dog off-leash area in the park. Alternate locations were reviewed by staff, however the north lot appears to be the best location. Staff will monitor traffic and parking impacts and make adjustments as necessary. Staff requested the Committee endorse its recommendation to the Board to move the market to the north lot for one season, after which the location will be evaluated.

Discussion

The Committee discussed the Vancouver International Soccer event. A member of the Committee inquired whether the event will include participation from children, but the event is for adults only.

The Committee discussed the Kitsfest event. A Committee member expressed concern about the location of a licensed area on the beach and inquired whether the other licensed could be made bigger to accommodate more guests. Staff noted that other events, such as the Corona Open, have a licensed area on the beach and increasing the size of the existing area would have residential impact. Further, having two licensed areas will allow spectators to view multiple events.

Staff introduced Mr. Howard from the Canada One Foundation, the organization responsible for hosting Kitsfest, and Mr. Julian Phipps, co-founder of Kitsfest. Mr. Kelsey addressed the Committee's concerns regarding the licensed area on the beach, noting that it will be fenced off and that the Vancouver Police Department is an official sponsor of the event, providing a measure of reassurance regarding security concerns.

A Committee member expressed concern about the complaints the event has received in the past and that the event is expanding despite these issues. Mr. Kelsey noted that three to five complaints were received last year, which is a small number compared to the 10,000 individuals that participated in the event. All complaints were addressed in a timely fashion and none related to alcohol consumption. Regarding the noise complaints received, this year organizers have

made an effort to move noise away from impacted neighbours. Staff also noted that the Park Board has received many compliments about the event and they have been impressed with the effort the Canada One Foundation has made to address complaints.

A Committee member inquired whether children will be involved in the events. Mr. Phipps replied that approximately 300 children will participate in the basketball tournament alone in addition to families that will come to watch the various sporting events.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Committee regarding the Farmer's Market:

- Tara McDonald
- Judy Biluk
- Rebecca Haber

The following is a summary of the comments made by the foregoing delegations:

- The Farmer's Market mandate includes trying to develop a sustainable local market
- It is oldest and most established farmer's markets
- The Trout Lake market has 5000 visitors per weekend and most come from the surrounding neighbourhood
- The Trout Lake market was recently recognized as one of top 10 markets in Canada
- It would cost farmer's if the market moved
- A move offsite would cost the market \$35,000
- The market is only requesting a temporary relocation
- The north lot is large enough to deal with the volume of visitors expected
- The move is supported by Grandview Woodlands association
- A petition has been signed by 1,700 people supporting the move
- Organizers have a history of dealing with issues as they arise and addressing concerns of neighbours
- The market will not be in off-leash area or in the bike path
- The market has trained staff that monitor the site and deal with concerns as they arise
- It will be hard to keep dogs out of market
- The event will use up too many parking lots
- There is concern about street traffic generated by the event
- There is concern about generator fumes and portable toilets close to residents
- Suggest the event should go to south lot where street parking is also available and there are less user groups
- People want to support market but north lot is not good location
- Have petition signed by 135 people opposing market
- Concerned the various user groups close to the north lot will conflict with each other
- The market is an institution in the community and encourages community development
- The goals of Vancouver to become the greenest city should not be impacted by concerns about traffic
- In terms of conflict between cyclists and the market, Saturday is not a big day for commuter cycling
- The market is a great benefit to the community

The Committee discussed the Trout Lake Farmer's Market event. A member of the Committee inquired whether staff had looked into other location for the market. Staff replied that other locations had been considered, however, the north lot is more controllable and can handle the size of the market.

A member of the Committee asked Ms. McDonald why the south lot is not viewed favourably by the Farmer's Market. Ms. McDonald replied that the current footprint of the market fits best in the north lot, access to 12th Avenue is better from the north lot, and the north lot is closer to transit routes. Staff have also looked at the south lot as a possibility, but it was ruled out due to the high number of people accessing the market and conflict with other user groups such as families trying to access the concession stand and beach.

A member of the Committee asked staff whether the city will allow parking along 19th Avenue, which is currently a no parking street. Staff replied that a request has been made to the city to have the no parking regulation changed.

A member of the Committee expressed concern about the traffic impact on the surrounding neighbourhood and asked staff what is being done to address it. Staff replied that they are working with the city to address traffic concerns and solutions are being sought. In addition, staff will monitor the traffic situation throughout the summer and make adjustments as necessary.

A member of the Committee asked staff how off-leash dogs can be separated from the market. One possibility is fencing in addition to requesting that dogs be put on-leash by owners if they are going to be in the market itself.

A member of the Committee asked where generators and washrooms will be located. Ms. McDonald noted that the generators will be located in the market area and have strict guidelines associated with their use. It is still uncertain whether washrooms will be provided.

The Committee endorsed staff recommendations regarding the Vancouver International Soccer Festival and Kitsfest. The Committee also endorsed staff recommendations regarding the Trout Lake Farmer's Market event with the caveat that more information needs to be provided regarding fencing, residential impact, parking, the location of generators and washrooms, and why the south lot is not a feasible option in the report that will go before the Board on April 19.

5. Memorial South Park Tennis Courts

Staff introduced Terry Kong, Chris Chinfen, and Les Brotherston who gave a presentation to the Committee on the need for an upgrade to the tennis courts at Memorial South Park.

Repairs were scheduled to be done to the court as part of the 2003-2005 draft Capital Plan, but were not placed in the final copy of the plan and still need to be repaired. The delegation requested that the upgrade of the four existing tennis courts be added to the 2009-2011 Capital Plan and that four additional lit courts be added. Lighting the courts will increase usage as the courts will be available for longer periods of time.

The delegation presented a petition with 237 signatures of tennis players who support the proposed upgrade. The tennis courts in Memorial South Park are ideal because they are centrally located and will increase fitness while helping prevent health issues, especially for high risk groups. The cost of the upgrades could be recouped by charging users a fee of \$4 per hour for use of a court.

The Committee thanked the delegation for their presentation.

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked staff whether implementing fees to light the courts at Memorial South Park has been considered. Staff replied that this suggestion was brought up previously but has not been considered further because lighting the courts will only add a few hours at the edges of the summer season for a significant capital cost. In terms of prioritizing the upgrade of the current courts, the upgrade was on the draft 2009-2011 Capital Plan, but other tennis courts required more immediate attention and have been prioritized over the courts at Memorial South Park. Of the 81 courts the Park Board has, 9% are in bad condition, while the courts at Memorial South Park are considered to be in fair condition. Staff are hopeful the upgrade of these courts will be a priority on the next Capital Plan.

The Committee and staff encouraged the delegation to work with other user groups to formulate a list of recommendations regarding tennis courts upgrades that can be used to inform the next Capital Plan.

6. Southeast False Creek Community Centre partnership opportunity with Canadian Sport Centre Pacific

Staff presented information on a potential partnership opportunity between the Southeast False Creek Community Centre and Canadian Sport Centre Pacific.

Some of the aims of the Vancouver Sport Strategy are to ensure Active for Life program providers are linked to provide complimentary programming and coordinated use of facilities, to build partnerships with high performance sports organizations, and engage in partnerships to develop sport and recreation infrastructure. These aims can be met by partnering with the Canadian Sport Centre Pacific, whose goal is to deliver sport performance programs that will aid athletes and coaches in their quest for medals.

Staff introduced Wendy Pattenden and Lucinda Jagger from Canadian Sport Centre Pacific who presented information about their organization. Canadian Sport Centres were created in partnership with Sport Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee, the Coaching Association of Canada and the Provincial Governments to deliver on the sport excellence policies of the federal and provincial governments. During the 2010 Winter Olympics, very few medals were won by Vancouver athletes, in part because there are few training facilities in the city. The identified gap can be filled through this partnership and allow the over 200 athletes in Vancouver to train at home.

It is proposed that the Canadian Sport Centre Pacific be allowed to use 950 square feet of the Southeast False Creek Community Centre for a strength and conditioning lab and 400 square feet for an administration area, both of which will be located on the first floor of the community centre. In addition, the organization will share the community centre's fitness centre, multipurpose rooms, plaza, seawall, and other exterior areas.

In terms of program opportunities, performance training and physical literacy services would be available as well as an opportunity to co-host special community events. The value for Park Board would include expanded programming, an enhanced fitness facility, increased revenue, a lasting legacy of the 2010 Winter Games, and cross promotional opportunities.

Staff propose that the Committee endorse its recommendation to the Board that a Memorandum of Understanding be established between the Southeast False Creek Community Centre and the Canadian Sport Centre Pacific for an initial term of three to five years.

Discussion

A member of the Committee asked how the high performance portion of the community centre could be used by regular citizens. A member of the delegation noted that this would have to be addressed in the Memorandum of Understanding and is dependent on how the Park Board would like to use the resources provided by the Canadian Sport Centre Pacific.

The Committee expressed enthusiasm for the proposed partnership and endorsed the staff recommendation which will go before the Board for final approval on May 3.

7. Stanley Park Shuttle Operation

Staff presented information on the proposed Stanley Park Shuttle Operation for 2010. The Park Board has offered a free shuttle, funded by pay parking revenues, around Stanley Park since 1998 with the exception of the 2000 and 2009 seasons. This service has been provided through a contract with the Vancouver Trolley Company, which had a five year operating agreement with the Park Board from 2004 to 2008 and had the option for renewal from 2009 to 2013 if the contract was renewed. In 2009, the Board entered a one year agreement with the Vancouver Trolley Company to provide a fair pay service.

Ridership in 2008 was 136,000. In 2009, a \$2 or \$1 fee was charged to users, although the cost of the operation was still subsidized by the Park Board with monies from pay parking revenues and the corporate sponsorship fund. Ridership in 2009 decreased to 51,000.

This year staff propose that a hop on/hop off service be provided on a trial basis for a one year period by any company that expresses interest. The shuttle service will be regulated by the market rather than the Park Board. Each operator will determine the details of their service, including fee charged, and if there is more than one operator, the operators must cooperate with

one another to share stops and avoid congestion. All operators must meet regulatory requirements including having all applicable licenses and permits.

For its part, the Vancouver Park Board will install signs at the 15 existing shuttle stops, promote the service on our website and Stanley Park Info Booth as well as other relevant marketing initiatives. The Board will also charge operators an annual bus parking pass rate for each bus in service, with revenue gained going towards the Board's cost of creating and installing signage at stops.

Staff sent letters to stakeholders in Stanley Park as well as the Vancouver Trolley Company requesting feedback on the proposal. Concerns expressed included competition with existing service providers, whether the service is economically viable, and the fee charged by the Board per bus used in the service. Staff believes these concerns will be addressed by the free market.

Discussion

The Committee expressed concern over the free market aspect of the service, voicing a preference for a single service provider. Staff noted that the Park Board does not have funds to contribute to the service and can no longer subsidize a shuttle operation. However, the Board can ensure that certain standards of service are met.

The Committee also expressed concern about the lack of regulation if a free market approach is taken and the reliability of operators to provide timely service. Staff noted that there will likely only be one operator and the service will be monitored throughout the year to determine whether it is successful. Further, purchase of the bus pass can be conditional based on the ability of an operator to meet certain requirements, such as ensuring that a minimum number of buses are in service.

The Committee supported staff's recommendation to open the shuttle service to the market, provided operators meet certain requirements outlined by staff.

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

Piet Rutgers, Director,
Planning & Operations

Commissioner Sarah Blyth,
Chair