

Supports Item No. 1
CS&B Committee Agenda
September 14, 2006



CITY OF VANCOUVER

OTHER REPORT

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Author: Don McIntyre, c/o
Pat Boomhower
Phone No.: 604.873.7015
RTS No.: 6159
VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-11
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TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets
FROM: Vancouver Athletic Commission
SUBJECT: Vancouver Athletic Commission - Annual Report for the year 2005-2006

RECOMMENDATION

THAT this report be received for information.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager submits the foregoing for INFORMATION.

PURPOSE

To provide Vancouver City Council with a report on the activities of the Vancouver Athletic Commission for the period of May 2005 to July 2006.

BACKGROUND

The Vancouver Athletic Commission (VAC) was established by Council in 1945. Section 338 of the *Vancouver* Charter empowers Council to establish the Vancouver Athletic Commission and the City of Vancouver By-law No. 2875 provides the Vancouver Athletic Commission's mandate.

City Council annually appoints the members of the Vancouver Athletic Commission to regulate prize fights in compliance with the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Under the *Vancouver Charter*, the Commission regulates contests and exhibitions involving professional boxing, wrestling and kick boxing. Kick boxing events are more commonly referred to as mixed martial arts. Members of the Commission include a City Councillor and four residents of the city. These resident appointees have all had lengthy and considerable experience with the Athletic Commission. Members are:

- Councillor Suzanne Anton
- Chair Roy Nosella - retired elementary school principal
- Vice-Chair George Angelomatis - current Provincial Court Judge
- Treasurer Robert Gatto - retired secondary school department head, and
- Corresponding Secretary Donald McIntyre - retired secondary school principal.

The Commission appointed Dr. Debbie Collins as its Medical Advisor and she has served as in that capacity for the past five years. In compliance with the rigid regulations of the Canadian Boxing Federation and the State of Nevada which is known as a leader in the field, Dr. Collins set medical procedures and ensured that safety remains our highest priority. She has recently stepped down and the Commission named Dr. Morgan Brache as her successor. The Medical Advisor, along with the other ringside physician, receive a fee for service which is paid by the event promoter.

The first contact with the Commission is through the City Clerk's Office. The Commission has enjoyed the diligent and competent assistance from meeting coordinator, Patricia Boomhower of that department for the past two years. Meetings are called by the Chair to address issues and event proposals and occur on an infrequent basis. Informal meetings and regular meetings increase before and after any promotion (event).

The Commission is a self sustaining entity. Modest licencing fees and seat taxes enable Commissioners to attend Annual General Meetings of the Canadian Boxing Federation for discussions and updates on rules and regulations. The Canadian Boxing Federation holds its meeting at the same time as the American Boxing Commission. While the Vancouver Athletic Commission is a member of the Canadian Boxing Federation, it is not a member of the American Boxing Commissions but has established contacts there.

DISCUSSION

1. Significant Activities:

There has been very little action this past year in professional prize fighting in Vancouver. Although there is an active amateur boxing scene in the Lower Mainland, no professional boxing occurred in Vancouver. Regular amateur cards take place in Burnaby before enthusiastic crowds and the Richmond River Rock Casino hosted the amateur Golden Gloves fights to a sellout crowd. Richmond has approached the Commission for advice in establishing its own Athletic Commission.

The Commission met informally with Attorney General Wally Oppal to solicit his support for a provincial authority/commission largely to protect athletes and patrons from questionable bootleg shows. He forwarded our concerns to the BC Minister of Sport. We have received no response at this time.

The major player in professional wrestling has been the WWE. Vancouver had one of their entertainment/sport type of show this past year, in 2005.

Two groups currently have valid VAC promoter's licences to hold mixed martial arts (kick boxing) shows in Vancouver: Elite Fighting Championships and King of the Cage (KOTC). Elite held a successful show at a downtown theatre attracting almost one thousand fans. The promoter was Mr. Harry Joa. Two other mixed martial arts events were held at a community hall in 2005 promoted by Mr. Jason Towns who has not sought a promoter's licence in 2006 but is working for KOTC. The Elite group has two proposed dates this fall at the PNE Agrodome.

Mixed Martial Arts is the general term referring to physical contests involving a mixture of jui jitsui, boxing, kick boxing, wrestling and other forms of hand to hand combat. The principal organizations world-wide currently are UFC (primarily USA based) rivalling professional boxing for pay-for-view monies, Pride (Japan based but consisting of international participants from Russia, Yugoslavia, USA and Brasil, and a broad spectrum of countries), and K-1 (Japan based). In Canada we have a variety of organizations putting on pro cards: Shoot-o, King of the Cage, and Elite Promotions. The difference between the organizations is primarily rule-based although actual fighting ring construction may differ. The VAC has accommodated different promotions by relying on their central bodies to supply competent referees and judges so that at this time, the VAC is able to source responsible trained referees based on the performances or refs and judges we have been exposed to.

Our safety requirements have not been compromised; our former chief doctor attended, through VAC funding, specialized courses in the United States specifically aimed at head injuries and martial arts. The VAC continues to have two doctors at each event in attendance as well as onsite ambulance with attendants, neurologist on call at the nearest hospital, and pre-bout and post-bout medicals. The prerequisite for fighting is licensing which includes full blood test, including HIV, EEG once a calendar year, random drug testing and independent medical confirmation of fitness. There are no compromises as the terms are not negotiable or variable. To date we have not had any serious injuries and our mandate of ensuring safety of the participants so as to save Vancouver harmless has been met. It is our hope that we continue to provide a safe protected environment. Most of the world has allowed mixed martial arts as have most of the United States, Calgary, Edmonton, Prince George and Eastern Provinces.

2. Future Directions

Commissioner Angelomatis has been liaising with the City's Legal and Risk Management Departments to update and streamline some of the forms and waivers used by the Commission. There have been no issues with our current documents; however, a review is welcomed if it will protect not only the City but also the Commission members from any potential claims or legal liability arising from the sanctioned contests and exhibitions. Results from those discussions are anticipated shortly.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing information is presented to Vancouver City Council for information. The Vancouver Athletic Commission looks forward to another year of service to the City and support for its efforts.

The Commission would like to thank Dr. Collins for her valuable assistance as Medical Advisor to the Commission, and to Nancy Largent, former Meeting Coordinator and recently retired Public Involvement Coordinator, for her guidance through the decades.

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