



CITY OF VANCOUVER

OTHER REPORT

Report Date: November 30, 2007
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VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-11
Meeting Date: January 31, 2008

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
FROM: Vancouver Athletic Commission
SUBJECT: Vancouver Athletic Commission - Annual Report for the year 2006-2007

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 August 2006 to October 2007.

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.

As part of the City's review of advisory committees to Council, the composition of the Commission was changed December 12, 2006 to have five appointees, rather than four and one Councillor liaison. These resident appointees have all had lengthy and considerable experience with the Athletic Commission. Members are:

- Chair Roy Nosella - retired elementary school principal
- Vice-Chair George Angelomatis - current Provincial Court Judge
- Treasurer Robert Gatto - retired secondary school department head
- Corresponding Secretary Donald McIntyre - retired secondary school principal
- Former VAC Medical Advisor - Dr. Rajindar Sandhu - retired general practitioner

The Commission appointed Dr. Morgan Brache as its Medical Advisor in the summer of 2006. 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, the VAC Medical Advisor, along with the Commission, ensures that safety remains our highest priority. The Medical Advisor and the other ringside physician(s) 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. 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:

Boxing

There was one boxing event which was put on by Double Jab Promotions at the Croatian Cultural Centre. The event held on September 27, 2007, featured local talent. The Commissioners commended Mr. Howard for his diligence staging his first professional boxing promotion in Vancouver. He met or exceeded all administrative and medical conditions set in the VAC Rules and Regulations for promoting a prize fight card. It was a disappointingly small but enthusiastic crowd that watched the five bouts.

Drug testing procedure was implemented as per VAC policy, and one participant tested positive for a banned substance under World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) guidelines, and was given a 60-day suspension as a result.

It was noted that the Commission is very pleased with Dr. Brache and his team's thoroughness attending each fighter and his report.

Wrestling

The major player in professional wrestling has been the WWE. Vancouver had one of their entertainment/sport type shows in February 2007 at the PNE Coliseum. The event was sanctioned and supervised by the VAC.

Mixed Martial Arts

The VAC sanctioned and supervised two mixed martial arts events which were held at the PNE Agrodome. The September 2006 event was organized by Elite Fighting Federation, and, in conjunction with BoDog, Elite sponsored a December 2006 event.

Both events ran smoothly, had competitive cards, and had no major injuries. However, at the September event, two participants were suspended for testing positive for cannabis, a banned substance (under WADA).

On September 20, 2007, Council directed the VAC to cease sanctioning professional mixed martial arts events until such time as staff report back to Council with the information as requested by Council. (Refer to Appendix A for Council meeting extract). Thus the VAC is waiting for further direction on the matter.

2. Future Directions

- i. To establish clearer communication guidelines between Council and the VAC.
- ii. To clarify the status of professional mixed martial arts in the city.
- iii. To review the licensing process as it applies to pro-wrestling.
- iv. To convince the Provincial Government that a province-wide body should be established to be responsible for the regulation of professional boxing, wrestling and mixed martial arts.
- v. To clarify participants' appeal process.
- vi. To update the VAC Promoter's Package of forms, conditions and procedures.
- vii. To secure sufficient clerical support.

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.

In closing, the Commission wishes to recognize two of our long serving Commissioners, who have spent over three decades as volunteers on the Vancouver Athletic Commission (VAC). They have decided not to re apply for the 2008 term. Mr. Bob Gatto has served on the VAC for the past 32 years. Beside his regular duties, he played a major role in ensuring that the financial aspects of the VAC were carried out in a responsible and diligent manner. Mr. Don McIntyre has served for the past 29 years and was instrumental in seeing, in his role as VAC secretary, that all business and communication matters were handled in a very competent and professional manner. The City was blessed to have had the services of these two dedicated gentlemen for such a long period. Their contributions have much to do with the fact that the VAC is considered one of the best in North America.

APPENDIX A

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

September 20, 2007

EXTRACT FROM REPORT TO COUNCIL
STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITY SERVICES AND BUDGETS
SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

3. Vancouver Athletic Commission - Sanctioning of Combat Sports
(VanRIMS No. 08-3000-11)

Council had before it an Administrative Report dated August 21, 2007 in which the City Clerk put forward for Council's consideration two options regarding the Vancouver Athletic Commission and the sanctioning of combat sports.

The Director of Risk Management made brief comments on the report and summarized the options proposed by staff. Staff responded to questions from Council.

Council heard six speakers, all of which spoke in favour of the sanctioning of ultimate fighting and mixed martial arts by the Vancouver Athletic Commission and commented on the degree of risk associated with this type of combat sport versus older forms of combat sport such as boxing.

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Note from Clerk: The Committee heard from speakers on item 3 prior to recessing at 12:55 p.m. The Committee returned to item 3 upon reconvening at 2:05 p.m. and completed consideration of this item.

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MOVED by Councillor Capri
THAT the Committee recommend to Council

- A. THAT Council approach UBCM with the request that the Province of British Columbia establish a provincial body for the purpose of regulating and supervising professional boxing, kick-boxing, wrestling, ultimate fighting, and mixed martial arts contests and exhibitions;
- B. THAT Council direct the Vancouver Athletic Commission to cease sanctioning UF/MMA contests and exhibitions in the City until such time as staff report back with information as requested by Council; and
- C. THAT, in the interim, staff report back to Council with the information concerning:
 - i. The role of the Athletic Commission, its regulatory function, and governance options;
 - ii. Succession planning regarding Commission members
 - iii. The support and tools required by the Athletic Commission to be effective in fulfilling their role;
 - iv. Comments from the Vancouver City Police regarding ultimate fighting and mixed martial arts (UF/MMA)
 - v. Comments from the Vancouver Athletic Commission regarding UF/MMA;
 - vi. Financial implications associated with a decision to disallow UF/MMA at City owned or operated facilities; and
 - vii. Options for cost recovery concerning the Athletic Commission and the related support and tools.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY