

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
HELD AT THE PARK BOARD OFFICE
ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2009**

PRESENT:	Chair	- Raj Hundal
	Vice Chair	- Loretta Woodcock
	Commissioners	- Constance Barnes
		- Sarah Blyth
		- Aaron Jasper
		- Ian Robertson
		- Stuart Mackinnon
	Acting General Manager	- Peter Kuran
	Director of Corporate Services	- Anita Ho
	Director of Vancouver East District	- Liane McKenna
	Director of Planning and Operations	- Piet Rutgers
	Co-Acting Director of Stanley District	- Philip Josephs
	Co-Acting Director of Stanley District	- Thomas Soulliere
	Acting Director of Queen Elizabeth District	- Diane Murphy
	Manager of Recreational Services	- Terry Walton
	- Vancouver East District	
	Manager of Horticulture and Arboriculture	- Bill Manning
	Supervisor of Queen Elizabeth Park and	- Alex Downie
	Sunset Nursery	
	Manager of Communications	- Joyce Courtney
	Recorder	- Shala Hay

CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported on the passing of Art Cowie, former Park Board Commissioner and conveyed the condolences of the Board to the family of Mr. Cowie. Art served on the Board during the period 1971 to 1974 and 1988 to 1993. Special mention was made of his significant contribution to many Park Board projects over the years.

Commissioner Mackinnon commented on the White Ribbon Campaign as a call for men to help end violence against women. White ribbons are to be worn during the period December 1st to December 6th, by men to show their support.

STAFF REPORTS

1. 2010 Operating Budget Update

The Board received a report dated November 20, 2009 recommending that the Board approve the proposed 2010 budget initiatives as outlined in the attached report titled "2010 Operating Budget Update", dated November 20, 2009 (Appendix A).

Staff provided an explanation of the City's 2010 budget shortfall and the \$2.792 million budget reduction allocated to the Park Board. A revision of the report presented at the Special Board meeting on November 17, 2009 was submitted to further clarify the recommendations; the original figures remained unadjusted. Staff also reported on the results of the public consultation.

Board members discussed the report. A Board member inquired into the reliability of external plant suppliers recommended to replace Sunset Nursery. Staff informed the Board that the greenhouse operation will continue to grow unique and speciality plants and only common varieties would be outsourced from local wholesale growers. A Board member expressed concern about the process for determining which parks should be assigned reduced garbage pickup and which neighbourhoods should suffer the loss of trees. Staff informed the Board that the focus will be on reducing the frequency of garbage pickup in areas where the current levels are not justified, to enhance efficiencies. Trees that pose safety hazards would be given priority and the density of street trees in neighbourhoods would be considered in determining which areas should be prioritized for tree replacement. A Board member inquired into the risk of postponing routine maintenance to facilities. Staff informed the Board that the effect would be a gradual lowering of maintenance standards, the impact of which would be seen over a period of years in terms of aesthetics, but the safety of facilities would be unaffected. A Board member inquired into the level of repairs needed at Bloedel Conservatory. Staff advised the Board that the required replacement of the panels would amount to approximately \$123,000; however over time it would be necessary to replace the entire dome which would cost around \$1.5-\$2 million. A Board member inquired into what would happen to the elderly animals at the farmyard and those with disabilities. Staff informed the Board that suitable homes would be found for animals requiring special care, a few humane societies have already volunteered to take some of the animals and more will be contacted as necessary.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Board:

- Wendy Tupling Guest, Riley Park Community Association
- Ken Thompson, President, Sunset Community Association
- Ron Corbett, Vice-President, Champlain Heights Community Association
- Maria Burtlehaus, Vancouver Coastal Health
- Gillian Collins
- Lorna Gibbs, Champlain, Victoria, Fraserview, Killarney Communities
- Steve Bouchard, President, Ray-Cam Cooperative Association
- Diane Halbert
- Patricia Badir, President, Strathcona Community Centre Association
- Paul Faoro, President, CUPE Local 15
- Keith Edwards
- Mavis Hnidy
- Jeff Malmgren, Vancouver Active Communities Network
- Ashley Sorensen
- Mike Jackson, President, CUPE Local 1004

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

- What happened to the \$10 million donation that was received to save the trees
- Contributions from facility users from other municipalities, cyclists, other municipal governments and the provincial government should be sought

- Vancouver parks and facilities provide a service to visitors from around the world and residents should not be the only ones who have to pay for this
- Community centres offer programs to low income households who are in need of assistance and play a vital role in communities; the Park Board should ensure that this message is communicated to Council
- Advise the Board to reject the report and work with the Community Centre Associations to develop a solution to the budget cuts
- Sunset Community Centre has a full schedule of programs and can not afford any cuts to its operating hours
- Discontinuation of the After School Care program at Champlain Heights would be a waste of the investment made by the Board and the Community Centre
- The Active Communities Nutritional program is strongly supported by Vancouver Coastal Health and there is a great concern that the program would not be able to continue if the Park Board cuts its funding
- If Bloedel is closed this would have a profound effect on Sunset Nursery and if plants are outsourced what would the function of the nursery be in the future
- Sunset Nursery ensures that plants are cultivated using the most environmentally friendly process
- The nursery can sell to the public to defray some of the cost, as is done at the New Westminster Nursery
- Would like the Board to consider every option to avoid increasing fees and charges, cutting hours and discontinuing programs at community centres
- This short term gain may lead to long term perils such as youths going astray and a decline in the health and wellbeing of seniors
- Champlain Heights needs the Board's assistance, unlike some other centres, as it does not generate much revenue; there is also need for a full time program coordinator
- The Board should look at more avenues to generate revenue rather than seeking cutbacks
- If Ray-Cam Community Centre is closed a few days of the week or the hours are reduced, at risk youths and less off citizens would be greatly affected
- Sunset Nursery is the core behind the City's world famous parks; it is a state of the art facility with cutting edge technology
- It supports the City's greenways and street trees, and supplies to the protocol department
- The children of Strathcona community are vulnerable and the proposed cuts would affect them at the times when they are most vulnerable
- The Park Board's role is to support its mission statement; with such a mission statement, how can the Board decide to continue with the budget cuts
- Why is the process moving forward when the City has not allocated the portion of the cuts that will go to the Board
- Thinks that the Park Board is over managed and the Board should examine the level of exempt staff
- The last Board exempted 15 members of staff, made them managers and increased their salaries; an injunction will be filed against this
- There are a lot of wastage in Park Board areas
- Does not agree with the operation of the farmyard, and preening of swans in the lost lagoon since they are not an indigenous species
- Received 401 signatures, in 3.5 days, opposing the closure of Bloedel Conservatory
- On Saturday visitors were lined up at the doors to visit the Conservatory

- The media attention alone brought 303 visitors; thinks that the conservatory is not advertised enough and some people still are not aware that it exists
- The accessibility issues the facilities had to face now no longer exist and it is going to be closed
- Thinks there are opportunities to rethink the operation and come up with new ideas for the conservatory, like making the experience more educational
- The building has heritage status and can not be destroyed so what purpose will it have
- If funding is cut for the Active Communities programs they will disappear
- The Board should think whether it can achieve what it was elected to do with the budget provided and if not staff should be advised that it is not possible
- The children's farmyard exposes kids to animals and its closure would mean the loss of another service that single low income families can access
- The farmyard should not be cut at a time when there would be the most number of visitors in the City
- Should use the remaining \$600,000 from the Stanley Park Restoration Fund to save the farmyard
- Why are no exempt staff members being cut; if there are fewer staff to manage, less supervisory staff will be needed
- Giving staff more money and less work, while passing off their work to subordinates is not acceptable
- Why is staff not being promoted from within the Park Board system, the majority of exempt staff came from external sources
- The reduction in street trees is against the drive to make the City the greenest in the world

The Chair called a short recess at 8:56 pm.

The meeting reconvened at 9:06 pm.

The following delegations requested to speak to the Board:

- Darcy Marquardt, Athletes In Vancouver
- Steve Varty, CUPE Local 1004
- Mike Bradley, President, Thunderbird Neighbourhood Association
- Ian Ogilvie, Champlain Heights Out of School Care Program
- Raymond Greenwood
- Eleanor Hadley
- Roy Forster
- Lore-Lei Hawkins, Ray-Cam Cooperative Association
- Sharon Urton, Vancouver Sport Network
- Chris Payne, Chair, Grnadvew Community Association
- Tamara Flick-Parker
- Mark Errett
- Nadiya Chettir
- Brian Orielly
- Joan Morales

The following is a summary of comments provided by the foregoing delegations.

- Athletes In Vancouver is a valuable program to kids and the impact is something that may not be known until later; funding for the program should not be cut
- The Community Associations requested to be consulted before the report was written and were refused by senior staff
- Staff at Champlain Heights Community Centre were not informed of what is going on and the daycare staff would like to know the parties that are interested in taking over the program
- Why isn't joint marketing done for Bloedel and VanDusen Gardens e.g. a two for one coupon
- Other ways of generating revenue should be looked into e.g. implementing paid parking in additional areas
- In a city that will be hosting the Olympics how can you talk about cutting services that are essential for a civic community
- Bloedel is an iconic structure in Vancouver and should not be degraded
- Ray-Cam Community Centre is right on the Hastings corridor in a community with unique needs
- The centre offers a special program that allows teens to gain work experience and any cutback in service would impact on their ability to enter the work place and put them at risk of becoming street involved
- There is no point in consulting with Community Associations after the budget has been approved as nothing can be done at that time
- The Active Communities Network was developed to get communities together, to be the healthiest city to ever host the Olympics; would like to ensure that the community centres are used to their fullest and programs are not cut
- 563 Names in support of saving the conservatory were submitted in an online forum

The Board thanked the delegations for their comments. The comments provided were discussed by the Board.

Moved by Commissioner Jasper,

THAT the Board approve the proposed 2010 budget initiatives as outlined in the attached report titled "2010 Operating Budget Update", dated November 20, 2009 (Appendix A), with the exception of the item pertaining to Sunset Nursery.

Board members discussed the motion. A Board member suggested that the motion be amended.

Moved by Commissioner Jasper,

- A. THAT the Board approve the proposed 2010 budget initiatives as outlined in the attached report titled “2010 Operating Budget Update”, dated November 20, 2009 (Appendix A), with the exception of the item pertaining to Sunset Nursery.**
- B. THAT staff evaluate alternative options to allow the Board to meet its 2010 Budget requirements.**

Board Members discussed the amendment.

The amendment to the main motion was put forward and it was Carried (Commissioner Robertson contrary).

Board members discussed the main motion as amended. A Board member stated that the Board is faced with a difficult decision and they are trying to find the right solution to avoid an increase in taxes. A Board member stated that the services provided by the Board are crucial at this time, due to the current economic condition, and the public will be relying more on these services, which they already pay for through taxes.

A Board member suggested a further amendment.

Moved by Commissioner Robertson,

THAT the Board direct staff to evaluate all options to find alternative sources of funding to operate the Children’s Farmyard and Bloedel Conservatory and report back to the Services and Budgets Committee in sixty days.

A Board member announced that a member of the community, Josef Wosk, pledged to donate \$100,000 to the Children’s Farmyard over the period of four years. A Board member inquired into whether changes can be made to service adjustments after the budget is approved and submitted to Council. Staff informed the Board that once the final figure that was approved remains the same, adjustments to the individual components could be made.

The amendment was put forward and it was Defeated (Commissioner Robertson and Commissioner Mackinnon contrary).

A Board member suggested another amendment.

Moved by Commissioner Woodcock,

THAT the Board direct staff to evaluate all options to find alternative sources of funding to operate the Children's Farmyard and report back to the Services and Budgets Committee in sixty days.

Defeated.

(Commissioner Woodcock and Commissioner Robertson Contrary)

The main motion as amended was put forward and it was Carried (Commissioner Mackinnon, Commissioner Robertson and Commissioner Woodcock contrary).

The motion as approved by the Board is as follows:

- A. THAT the Board approve the proposed 2010 budget initiatives as outlined in the attached report titled "2010 Operating Budget Update", dated November 20, 2009 (Appendix A), with the exception of the item pertaining to Sunset Nursery.**
- B. THAT staff evaluate alternative options to allow the Board to meet its 2010 Budget requirements.**

Enquiries, Other Matters and New Business

A Board member requested staff to submit a memo to the Board to report on where each animal from the farmyard was placed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:46 pm.

Peter Kuran
Acting General Manager

Commissioner Raj Hundal
Chair