



Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee

Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2014

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Councillor Ken Johnston
Councillor Bill McNulty
Mayor Malcolm Brodie

Absent: Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt

Also Present: Councillor Chak Au
Councillor Derek Dang

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

It was moved and seconded

That the minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee held on Tuesday, February 25, 2014, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

There was agreement to vary the order of the agenda to consider Item No. 2 last.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

Tuesday, April 29, 2014, (tentative date) at 4:00 p.m. in the Anderson Room

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

1. **RICHMOND ATHLETIC COMMISSION 2014 UPDATE**
(File Ref. No. 11-7200-01) (REDMS No. 4170128)

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the staff report titled Richmond Athletic Commission 2014 Update, dated March 6, 2014, from the Senior Manager, Parks, be received for information; and*
- (2) *That Richmond Athletic Commission Repeal Bylaw No. 9130 be introduced and given first second and third reading.*

CARRIED

2. **GARDEN CITY LANDS LEGACY LANDSCAPE PLAN**
(File Ref. No. 06-2345-20) (REDMS No. 4169130)

Please see Page 3 for action on this matter.

3. **RICHMOND PUBLIC ART PROGRAM 2013 ANNUAL REPORT AND PUBLIC ART ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2014 WORK PLAN**
(File Ref. No. 01-0100-30) (REDMS No. 4167862)

It was moved and seconded

That the Richmond Public Art Advisory Committee 2014 Work Plan be approved as presented in the staff report dated March 4, 2014 from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services.

CARRIED

4. **BRITANNIA SHIPYARDS STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2018**
(File Ref. No. 11-7140-20) (REDMS No. 4164911)

It was moved and seconded

That the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site Strategic Plan 2014-2018 as outlined in the staff report, dated March 6, 2014, from the Senior Manager, Parks be endorsed to guide the future development and operation of Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site.

The question on the motion was not called as in reply to a query from Committee, Mike Redpath, Senior Manager, Parks, advised that the Britannia Shipyards Strategic Plan encompasses waterfront pilings.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

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2. **GARDEN CITY LANDS LEGACY LANDSCAPE PLAN**
(File Ref. No. 06-2345-20) (REDMS No. 4169130)

With the aid of a presentation (on file, City Clerk's Office), Mr. Redpath accompanied by Yvonne Stich, Parks Planner, gave an overview of the proposed Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan and highlighted the following key elements:

- the bog will be preserved as a natural area and a small dyke is proposed along the bog's edge to protect its ecology;
- the mound, a former landfill site in the northwest corner of the Lands, is proposed to be developed as a community park; dense tree planting is anticipated to provide a buffer along Alderbridge Way;
- the existing wetland area will integrate into the site's storm water management strategy; a canal structure and several filtration ponds will facilitate this integration;
- the community hub will act as the Lands' main entry, and will host multi-functional agricultural buildings, community gardens, and an event field;
- the Plan proposes to develop the fields on a grid system, and the fields will be crisscrossed with public paths;
- the sanctuary, an important ecological and sensitive area within the bog environment, is proposed to be developed as a green oasis in the centre of the Lands;
- the edges of the Lands will be developed through a variety of features, such as meandering paths, concrete sidewalks, boardwalks, and plantings;
- the proposed Plan is a long-term vision, and as such, must be adaptable; on-going communication with the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and cautious development are also important facets of the Plan; and
- next steps include: (i) undertaking detailed hydrology monitoring and testing, (ii) developing a detailed resource management plan for the site, (iii) developing a funding strategy and multi-year implementation plan, (iv) preparing a phased multi-year capital submission, (v) developing a partnership strategy, and (vi) establishing an interpretation program and phased programming strategy for the Lands.

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Discussion ensued regarding the importance of conducting a hydrology study in order to determine the most suitable areas for development. Committee expressed concern with regard to the (i) proposed level of development for the Lands, (ii) practicality of the 'off the grid' concept, particularly as it relates to crop rotation, (iii) mound soil conditions, and (iv) number and size of proposed farm buildings.

In response to queries from Committee, Mr. Redpath and Ms. Stich provided the following additional information:

- the 'off the grid' concept was the most popular choice among the public during the second round of consultation;
- approximately 50 acres of the Lands will be farmland;
- staff will review the 'off the grid' concept as it relates to crop rotation;
- the proposed Plan is conceptual; however, staff worked closely with the Burns Bog Scientific Advisory Panel to identify areas of the Lands to be protected;
- the proposed Plan has no intention to remove or to replace the mound area's soil;
- the Plan proposes a series of small scale multi-functional buildings, which will support agricultural activities and act as gathering space for community meetings, a farmer's market, and so forth;
- the establishment of a perimeter trail would be a high priority once the hydrology testing and storm water management strategy have been completed; and
- should the proposed Plan be ratified by Council, it is anticipated that a communication event be held on the Lands.

Discussion took place regarding the agricultural fields' orientation, dimensions suitable for crop rotation, and the merits of Metro Vancouver's Colony Farm Land Use Plan. Committee recommended that the proposed Plan be circulated to the Agricultural Advisory Committee for comment.

Jim Wright, on behalf of the Garden City Conservation Society, was of the opinion that the Garden City Lands be stewarded as an Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) park for community wellness. Mr. Wright read from his written submission (attached to and forming part of these minutes as **Schedule 1**).

De Whalen, representing the Richmond Poverty Response Committee, supported the proposed Plan's passive recreation uses, the community fields, and the preservation of the bog. Ms. Whalen was of the opinion that preservation of the bog and additional passive recreational space will foster a healthy community and create an attractive indigenous flora and fauna.

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Gordon Lee, Vice President, Finance and Administration, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) accompanied by Dr. Rebecca Harbut, Researcher and Sustainable Agriculture Instructor, spoke in favour of the proposed Plan. Mr. Lee noted that KPU is committed to collaborating with the City and community groups for the development of the proposed 20-acre educational farm on the Lands. Further, Mr. Lee noted that KPU has committed funds towards this project and is currently pursuing additional funding avenues to ensure a sustainable operation for both KPU and the City.

In response to a query from Committee, Dr. Harbut advised that KPU is interested in commenting on the proposed Plan as it relates to agricultural best practices.

Nancy Trant, 10100 No. 3 Road, spoke of Richmond's agricultural legacy and its flora and fauna. Ms. Trant expressed support for the proposed agricultural uses, and for the preservation of the bog and natural environments on the Lands.

Discussion ensued regarding circulating the proposed Plan to the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee on the Environment. As a result of the discussion, the following **referral** was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

That the Garden City Lands Legacy Landscape Plan be referred back to staff to consider the comments of Committee members including:

- (1) forwarding the Plan to the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee on the Environment, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and other stakeholders for comments;*
- (2) revising the Plan to reflect a north/south grid orientation; and*
- (3) investigating the need for the wetland and the expansion of the bog.*

The question on the referral was not called as discussion ensued regarding (i) adopting the proposed Plan as a guide for the future, (ii) the potential of expanding the bog to include lands to the west, and (iii) exploring the feasibility of farming the wetland.

The question on the referral was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

5. **MANAGER'S REPORT**

(i) Community Services Department Updates

Dee Bowley-Cowan, Acting Manager, Parks Programs, highlighted that, in partnership with the West Richmond, Steveston, and Thompson Community Associations, the City will tidy the Railway Avenue corridor and other green spaces as part of Earth Day, scheduled for April 22, 2014.

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Ted DeCrom, Manager, Parks Operations, commented on annual spring activities for Parks crews and noted that the recently unveiled Street Banners will be installed during non-peak hours in an effort to minimize traffic impacts.

Jane Fernyhough, Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, provided an update on the removal of the graffiti on the Cenotaph. In response to a query from Committee, Ms. Fernyhough advised that due to the properties of the stone, a protective coating cannot be applied to the Cenotaph.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (5:24 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Tuesday, March 25, 2014.

Councillor Harold Steves
Chair

Heather Howey
Committee Clerk

Jim Wright, speaking for the Garden City Conservation Society

Councillor Steves and committee,

I've spent lots of time reviewing the revised concept for enhancing the Garden City Lands. It is much improved.

I should mention here that I'm taking the broad perspective of the community who saved the lands by rising up to *conserve* the lands for **ALR values**.

The statements of goals and principles in the report are mostly excellent. The ideas fair and open house that are described were mostly excellent too. As always, the images look attractive.

Those strengths helped free me to focus on the key question on behalf of the community: Can we be confident that the lands will be **stewarded** as an **ALR** park for ALR uses for *community wellness*?

Stewardship involves strong values. In this case, they would be strong **ALR** values along with clear commitment to community wellness. (So I looked for that.)

Stewardship also involves down-to-earth practicality. So I looked for signs of practical thinking for the range of ALR uses: agricultural, ecological and related open-land recreation.

Unfortunately, I still see ALR **evasion**. For instance, changing the Community Fields label enabled *deniability*, but that's all. Under the new labels of "Event Field" and "The Commons," the Community Fields for contra-ALR uses are even larger.

Of course that's deniable, but as *grass* fields they'd just be tourist destinations—for snow geese. That happens to be okay with me, but are we really aiming for edible airports?

Let's move on. For both agriculture and bog conservation, the trails will typically need to serve water management roles. That's the logical way to separate the acidic water for bog restoration from agricultural water (usually alkaline). And water-level management is needed for *everything*. But there are something like 35 trail illustrations, and I noticed *none* that obviously serve that purpose. Most of them obviously do *not*.

Basic *hydrology* thinking for water management was to be part of Phase 1 in the six phases, but there's no sign of it.

Finishing phase 1 would also involve going out on the lands with an expert guide like Michael Wolfe to see the effect of invasive species. But the revised concept describes *Scotch heather* almost as though it's good, when it is actually a fast-advancing *invader*. In effect, it is strangling the sphagnum bog ecosystem. That's becoming another lost legacy. It's not ALR park stewardship.

Getting back to the trails, there's consensus on the importance of the *perimeter* trail. It's needed for community access and hydrology, but first of all it is an **ALR farm road** (for service vehicles). With **ALR-park thinking**, that would be brought out in the concept. (It isn't.)

For community wellness, the lands would be **accessible**, starting with that perimeter trail. Incredibly, nothing in the words or images shows design to enable mobility scooters, walkers and wheelchairs. It's just more of the disregard for ordinary people that has lost us the viewscape legacy. That is sad.

The concept is full of nice sentiments. We now need a *practical* plan for an authentic ALR park.

We have capable decent people on staff. Let's get rid of the contra-ALR millstone around their neck. Let them plan how to *steward* the **ALR** park and **save** natural legacies for community wellness.