



Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee

Date: Tuesday, October 29, 2013

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Councillor Ken Johnston
Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Mayor Malcolm Brodie

Absent: Councillor Bill McNulty

Also Present: Councillor Chak Au
Councillor Linda McPhail

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, September 24, 2013, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

Tuesday, November 26, 2013, (tentative date) at 4:00 p.m. in the Anderson Room

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

1. **ALEXANDRA NEIGHBOURHOOD PUBLIC ART PLAN**

(File Ref. No. 11-7000-09-20-158) (REDMS No. 3979863)

Eric Fiss, Public Art Planner, advised that the Alexandra Neighbourhood Public Art Plan is the second in a series of local area plans that would serve as a guide for the placement of public art in the rapidly developing Alexandra neighbourhood.

It was moved and seconded

That the Alexandra Neighbourhood Public Art Plan as presented in the staff report from the Director, Arts Culture & Heritage Services dated October 8, 2013 be approved as a guide for the placement of public art in the Alexandra Neighbourhood.

CARRIED

2. **RICHMOND MEMORIAL GARDEN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

(File Ref. No. 06-2345-01) (REDMS No. 3806792 v.3)

Mike Redpath, Senior Manager, Parks, stated that the staff report supports the Council Term goal for completion of the proposed memorial garden project.

Discussion ensued regarding the appropriateness of the Woodward's Landing Park site for the proposed memorial garden. The Woodward's Landing Park, with its deep waterfront moorage, would be better served by an industrial use. Alternative locations were discussed, such as, the Nature Park East, should the Girl Guide Park be relocated to the Terra Nova Natural Area, and the Grauer lands.

In reply to a query from Committee, Mr. Redpath advised that 22 sites were examined including the Nature Park; however, the Nature Park lands are in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and therefore a memorial garden is not a permitted use. Also, he noted that through the consultation process at the time of the Terra Nova Rural Park project, community support was low with regard to locating a memorial park in proximity to a residential area.

Mr. Redpath further noted that staff has held numerous discussions with the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) regarding various memorial garden proposals on agricultural land and the ALC has indicated that memorial gardens are not a permitted use. Committee suggested that, considering the soil conditions and the type of trees on the Nature Park East, staff reconsider the site and have further discussion with the ALC regarding the Nature Park.

Jamie Esko, Park Planner, advised that none of the other sites examined met the criteria established under the feasibility study, particularly any lands in proximity to residential uses and within the ALR.

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Further discussion was held on the Expression of Interest criteria and the long-term vision for the memorial garden. As a result of the discussion the following **referral** was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

That the staff report titled "Richmond Memorial Garden Expression of Interest" be referred back to staff for a review of a longer list of appropriate City-owned sites including the Nature Park East and the East Richmond Bog Forest.

The question on the referral was not called as discussion ensued regarding whether or not to proceed with the Expression of Interest. Committee expressed that the Expression of Interest would be conducted once staff have reported back on the review of City sites and have obtained further information from the ALC. The question on the referral was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

3. **GRAUER LANDS HABITAT ENHANCEMENT WORKS**

(File Ref. No. 01-0107-04-01) (REDMS No. 4002822 v.4)

Mr. Redpath advised that the habitat enhancement works were conducted under the terms of the Resource Management Plan which was developed as a condition of the purchase and sale agreement and ensured that any future enhancement works would be brought forward for Committee consideration.

It was moved and seconded

That the staff report "Grauer Lands Habitat Enhancement Works," from the Senior Manager Parks, dated October 15, 2013 be received for information.

The question on the motion was not called as clarification surrounding the Resource Management Plan was requested by Committee. Mr. Redpath advised that Council approved the purchase and sale agreement for the Grauer lands and the Resource Management Plan was referenced in the agreement. However, the document was not brought before Council. Staff was advised that the document should have been submitted to Council. The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

4. **GARDEN CITY LANDS - PHASE TWO CONCEPT PLAN OPTIONS**

(File Ref. No. 06-2345-20-GCIT1) (REDMS No. 4007524 v.4)

Mr. Redpath and Yvonne Stich, Park Planner, gave a brief overview of the three concept plans developed using the vision and guiding principles endorsed by Council and highlighted the following:

- elements common to all three options are the natural and water features, agricultural fields, gateways and connections, parkland spaces and circulation, interpretative art opportunities, and a community farm and sustainability hub;

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- a large naturalized woodlot is proposed on the north edge along Alderbridge Way to reflect the environmentally sensitive areas in West Cambie and to add biodiversity to the lands;
- the raised peat bog area will be retained in each concept and will require further research to determine the ultimate management strategy;
- the bog watercourse will be protected with a buffer area between it and other uses;
- the “On the Grid” option breaks the site into one acre square parcels that are flexible and can be combined into larger grid areas or broken down into even smaller units providing a variety of scales of agricultural plots, garden areas, and community activity spaces;
- a five-kilometre perimeter walking, jogging, cycling trail will be developed; and
- a ten-acre multi-purpose community field is included in each option.

Discussion ensued regarding the hydrology of the bog and related watercourse posing the biggest challenge to the feasibility of any of the options presented. Any development of the area, including a naturalized woodlot, could have a major impact on the survival of the bog and watercourse.

Ms. Stich stated that, with the assistance of various experts, a biophysical inventory has been completed with the conclusion, that in order to properly design and manage the site, further studies would be required. In consultation with the Scientific Advisory Panel for Burns Bog, suggestions were made that monitoring of the hydrology of the bog take place for a minimum of two to five years. City objectives must be determined and a sustainable long-term management plan developed through careful monitoring of the site. Previous practices have allowed farming to occur adjacent to the leading edge, or lag, of the bog; however, a greater understanding of the lag area is required in order to preserve the bog in the future.

In reply to a query regarding the development of a naturalized woodlot, Ms. Stich advised that the layered woodlot would be a mix of deciduous, conifer, and ornamental trees, scrub and ground cover to create a diverse wildlife habitat.

Further discussion ensued regarding the public consultation process and what information would be provided to the public. The Open House should not only provide information on the various proposals but should be used as an opportunity to educate residents on the management of the bog. Committee expressed that it would be important that residents are made aware that the development of the Garden City Lands would be a long-term project and that, in order to properly develop the site, nothing would be happening on the land in the near future.

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In response to queries regarding the Public Open House, Mr. Redpath advised that a mail drop has been prepared for neighbourhoods that are on the perimeter of the land. The consultation process would be an educational opportunity to discuss the long-term plan in terms of the bog as well as providing an opportunity for feedback on what elements most closely support the guiding principles for development of the site. Staff would then re-examine the feasibility of each element prior to developing a final concept.

Jim Wright, President, Garden City Conservation Society, spoke to the proposed concept plans and read from his submission (attached to and forming part of these Minutes as **Schedule 1**).

Jim Lamond, Richmond Sports Council, spoke to the Garden City Lands and the Sports Council's vision that these lands be a community park. The options being considered incorporate active sports fields and passive recreational uses. He expressed appreciation for the information provided and was of the opinion that the City is moving in the right direction.

It was moved and seconded

That the Concept Plans as detailed in the staff report "Garden City Lands - Phase Two Concept Plan Options" from the Senior Manager, Parks dated October 15, 2013, be received for information.

CARRIED

5. MANAGER'S REPORT

(i) Community Services Department Updates

Dee Bowley-Cowan, Acting – Manager, Parks Programs, provided an update on the Snow Geese Management program noting that:

- the Volunteer Dog program has increased to eighteen families and is being offered at over fifteen schools and parks alongside the City's dog hazing program;
- the Snow Goose Education program to local elementary school classes, run through the Nature Park, are fully booked for October through December and staff are working on the January through March bookings;
- staff is working with the Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR) to deter the geese through a new falconry program; and
- the winter covered crop program has begun and is being offered in Richmond and Delta.

Ms. Bowley-Cowan advised that Minoru Park will host a Halloween event commencing at 6:30 p.m. with clowns, musicians, and fire-jugglers performing on the main stage with fireworks to follow at 8:15 p.m.

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In reply to a query regarding dog parks, Ms. Bowley-Cowan advised that a pilot project is being conducted at Dover Park using a temporary fenced enclosure. Staff is looking for other sites that would be suitable for fenced or non-fenced dog parks.

Elizabeth Ayers, Manager, Community Recreation Services, noted that firework displays are being offered at Sea Island, South Arm, West Richmond, and Hamilton Community Centres on Halloween night. South Arm Community Centre will also be running a haunted house.

Gregg Wheeler, Manager, Sports and Community Events, advised that meetings have been held with the RCMP, Fire-Rescue, Bylaw Enforcement, School Board, Transit Police, and various staff to coordinate efforts to ensure a safe Halloween evening.

Mr. Redpath provided an update regarding pier repairs at the east end of Steveston Highway.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (5:18 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, October 29, 2013.

Councillor Harold Steves
Chair

Heather Howey
Committee Clerk

GCCS Comments on GCL Phase Two Concept Plan Options

As usual, I'm Jim Wright. I'm speaking for the **board** of the Garden City Conservation Society about the Concept Plans.

Our directors were pleased that **ALR commitment** was evident. Unfortunately, I've just learned that the "Community fields" label in the plans means "five soccer fields," which is not an ALR use.

The stated elements seem fine. So in the big picture the park planning was promising, and we intended to commend the team.

Some concerns did come up when we got to the illustrated set of options. As always, we aim to help **steward** our central park as ALR parkland for agriculture, recreation and conservation for community wellness. That means doing our part to **enable informed choices**.

For a start, we urge a visual presentation that makes information easy to grasp on a computer screen. With my large screen and computer glasses, the text explanations are illegible in the largest window where a whole page fits. That's after I rotate it, which some people can't do. It takes all my effort to make out what it says, and that stops me from thinking about the concepts at the same time. Decoding the *maps* is even harder, starting with trying to see the numbers on the maps. Simple things, big impact.

The colourful artwork for the concepts will prompt a **wow** factor, an instant reaction that gets people feeling warm and fuzzy. It was great that the excellent Ideas Fair accomplished that; in this phase, let's enable **every** web visitor who wants to make informed choices to take in the info easily.

Yvonne Stich has just told me she's addressing the problem. I suggest that the public consultation not start until the problem is solved.

Secondly, we're glad to see an effort to bring in what the **nature** of the lands is telling us. However, we're aware that the concepts could have gone further that way by drawing on **readily available knowledge**. We were sorry to have to look for least bad options instead of best ones.

As an example, I know from top local experts that the northwest berm of clean soil fill is well suited to orchards (after obvious kinds of preparation). That was one of the points the biophysical inventory consultants missed, and we guess the concepts reflect that, but local Conservation Society expertise would have caught it instantly.

We *don't* want to **impose** our help, and we have *made known* that it's available. It *would* enable optimal results and *might* cut the timeline in half. We *will* continue to help, and the impact will be greater if we're helping the park team more *directly*.

To see how that works, let's look at the parallel example. The scene is the Grauer Lands at Sturgeon Bank on a sunny mid-August day. My wife and I are cycling south on the west dike when we see backhoes on the bank. What??? There are five of them, destroying the array of driftwood logs from the highest tides of scores of years. "Port Metro!" I say. "They're destroying our ecosystem—the habitat! And the viewscapes!" Then a sign credits the City of Richmond, so I despair.

Later, here at parks committee, I learned that not even the chair was told about it. (And logs are **not** mentioned in the *Management Plan for Grauer Property* of June 2012.) A natural legacy is gone. Even if the new plan is **better**, bringing in the local knowledge early on would have cut the risk. Normally I'd be out on the west dike all the time. Ever since we came across that August scene, I can't face it, not even once.

That's the difference when informed local input is left out.