



Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee

Date: Tuesday, June 29, 2010

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Harold Steves, Chair
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt, Vice-Chair
Councillor Sue Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Ken Johnston
Councillor Bill McNulty
Mayor Malcolm Brodie

Also Present: Councillor Linda Barnes
Councillor Greg Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Derek Dang

Call to Order: The meeting was called 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 Wednesday, May 26, 2010, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

Tuesday, July 27, 2010 (tentative date) at 4:00 p.m. in the Anderson Room.

It was agreed that the following items be added to the agenda:

- i) *Wellness Strategy for Council Members and Staff During Long Meetings*; and

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- ii) Non-Compliance by Dog Owners of On-Leash Bylaws at Iona Metro Park.*

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

1. PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUND AREAS

(File Ref. No.: 06-2345-01) (REDMS No. 2912592)

Serena Lusk, Manager, Parks-Planning and Design, provided the following information in response to queries:

- current playground projects that help meet universal accessibility guidelines are in Tait Elementary School and Steveston Community Park;
- Garden City Community Park offers play opportunities for toddlers in the City Centre area and Paulik Neighbourhood Park will provide tot swings in the playground area by the end of the year;
- staff is working with the City Centre Community Association to upgrade Cook Elementary School Park; and
- playground equipment being provided for pre-school aged children has a life span of 10 years.

Comments were made regarding (i) the high population of pre-school aged children in the City Centre Area and the lack of playgrounds and play opportunities for infants and toddlers in the said area; and (ii) the possible undesirable effects of the lack of playgrounds for kids living in the City Centre area.

In view of said comments, direction was given that Parks and Recreation staff coordinate with Planning Department staff and report back on:

- i) the specific needs of all City Centre area parks, pre-school age playground equipment to be provided in each park, and status of planned acquisition and construction of parks;*
- ii) the status of development applications in the City Centre area including proposed outdoor amenities; and*
- iii) a joint and proactive strategy to provide sufficient playground areas and outdoor amenities for pre-school aged children in the City Centre area.*

It was moved and seconded

That the staff report, dated June 8, 2010, from the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, entitled "Pre-School Playground Areas", be received for information.

CARRIED

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2. SNOW GEESE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

(File Ref. No.: 11-7375-00) (REDMS No. 2810813)

Jack Evans, Wildlife Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Branch, B.C. Ministry of Environment, distributed copies of the Fraser Valley Special Hunting License Brochure (copy on file, Clerk's Office) and stated the following:

- there are around 2,000 holders of Fraser Valley special area hunting licenses and contrary to the staff report, the number of waterfowl hunters in Fraser Valley has remained stable for a long time;
- harvest of waterfowl for food, social and ceremonial reasons are presently done by First Nations in Lower Mainland;
- the population of snow geese has increased dramatically during the last ten years and control of their behaviour and distribution poses a big challenge to Richmond;
- waterfowl hunting is the most effective tool in North America in controlling waterfowl behaviour and does not cost anything;
- available and conscientious volunteers for waterfowl hunting can be tapped and certain techniques and regulations can be put in place to promote public safety;
- waterfowl hunting using shotguns already exists in Richmond through a permit system which could be expanded to cover Crown land areas; and
- no issues and complaints on the said activity have been raised so far by regulatory and law enforcement agencies.

In response to queries from Committee, Mr. Evans advised the following:

- public use of the west dyke can continue and need not be impacted by the proposed hunting strategy as a training course for hunters could be made specifically tailored for the area as was done in Squamish;
- snow geese behaviour is affected by the weather and tide movements;
- the maximum level of activity is needed to influence their behaviour and the best case scenario is that hunting is done on a daily basis;
- hunting by permission gives policy makers control over the conduct of hunting to protect the safety of the public such as limited access for hunters to certain places and placement of appropriate warning signage;
- waterfowl hunting can reduce waterfowl population, but its bigger impact is its ability to control and influence the distribution and behaviour of birds; and
- a study pointed out that Fraser delta can support about 40,000 snow geese on a sustainable basis.

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The Chair distributed copies of his report to the Committee (Attached to and forming part to these Minutes as Schedule 1) and spoke on the marked increase of snow geese population in Sturgeon Bank which grew from about 20,000 in 1972 to around 100,000 at present. He added that in 1972, scientists Harris and Halliday made a study about the snow geese population entitled *Commitment to the Future* and appeared before Council where they predicted the occurrence of the present-day snow geese phenomenon in Richmond.

The Chair further advised that:

- in 1972, snow geese brought destruction to Sturgeon Bank where they dug and ate the roots of bulrushes and transformed it into a muddy area which remains at present;
- the same kind of damage was done by the snow geese in inland areas near the dyke in Steveston which deprived the cows of pasture areas; and
- the destruction wrought by the snow geese would not have happened if hunting had not been banned in Sturgeon Bank as the problem could not be solved through hazing.

In response to a query, Dave Semple, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, clarified that (i) he recommends option 2 as outlined in the staff report; (ii) other options to be considered in the future will have to be guided by science; and (iii) the proposal of snow geese hunting by professionals will be subject to public discussion and will be considered only as a last resort if no significant results are seen in the first and second years of implementation of option 2.

In response to a query, Mr. Evans advised that donation of hunted snow geese to the food bank is not feasible due to public health concerns.

It was moved and seconded

That option 2 as outlined in the staff report dated June 16, 2010, from the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, entitled "Snow Geese Management Strategy" be adopted and that funding for the first year of implementation of the strategy will be considered from the 2009 surplus funds and for the succeeding two years through the regular budget process.

The question on the motion was not called as comments were made regarding (i) the high cost of implementing option 2 compared to other effective and inexpensive methods in reducing snow geese population such as culling; (ii) the possibility of using option 2 as a guideline and implement only those components that are workable (which excludes the winter crop cover program in Richmond) and looking into other alternatives such as the hiring of professional hunters; (iii) the need to deal promptly with the problem brought about by the increase in snow geese population in Richmond; and (iv) the ineffectiveness of hazing as a method to alter snow geese behaviour and distribution.

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The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Councillors Johnston and McNulty.

It was moved and seconded

That staff report back on a wildlife management strategy for snow geese and widgeons on the west dyke similar to what is being implemented at the Vancouver International Airport (YVR).

CARRIED

The Chair requested that a representative of YVR be invited to make a presentation to the Committee on YVR's wildlife management strategy when staff reports back to the Committee on the matter.

CORRESPONDENCE & PROJECTS

3. None.

4. **MANAGER'S REPORT**

None.

OTHER ITEMS

5. **WELLNESS STRATEGY FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS AND STAFF DURING LONG MEETINGS**

Cllr. Barnes advised Committee on the adverse effects to health of prolonged sitting during long meetings. Discussion ensued regarding various ways of dealing with the issue particularly during long Council meetings.

As a result of the discussion, direction was given that staff report back on a wellness strategy for staff and Council members for meetings of more than two hours duration.

6. **NON-COMPLIANCE BY DOG OWNERS OF ON-LEASH BYLAWS AT IONA METRO PARK**

Cllr. Sue Halsey-Brandt advised Committee of a letter from Richard Swantson (attached to and forming part to these Minutes as Schedule 2) regarding the non-compliance by dog owners of on-leash bylaws at Iona Metro Park and direction was given that staff communicate with Metro Vancouver to maintain contact on the issue.

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ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting adjourn (5:26 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, June 29, 2010.

Councillor Harold Steves
Chair

Rustico Agawin
Committee Clerk

Snow Geese and Mosquitoes at the Steveston Highway Outfall – Harold Steves

Every fall thousands of Snow Geese and widgeon are attracted to the wet area created by the outfall and by spring it is a sea of mud. When there is snow in winter, the warmer water from the outfall provides a “green” area for the geese to stay and feed instead of going south. In summer, the water from the outfall it is a breeding ground for mosquitoes that must be monitored and treated by the Richmond Health Dept. 30 years ago Kelvin Higo said areas such as this should be filled to eliminate mosquito habitat. Instead the area has increased by several acres. We cannot put cattle on the wet area because of the mud and because it makes it more difficult to control the mosquitoes. Since the Snow Geese arrived we have had four years of losses on the farm.



Schedule 1 to the Minutes of the
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Services Committee meeting
held on Tuesday, June 29, 2010.

The foreshore marsh is a “jumping off” area for flying inland to our farm, school and park sites



Mayor and Councillors

Schedule 2 to the Minutes of the
Parks, Recreation and Cultural
Services Committee meeting
held on Tuesday, June 29, 2010.

From: Councillor Gayle Martin [gmartin@langleycity.ca]
Sent: June 17, 2010 9:25 PM
To: Richard Swanston; clrstevenson@vancouver.ca
Cc: Andre.Breault@ec.gc.ca; Semple, Dave; Mayor and Councillors; jmhunt@surrey.ca;
ed.andrusiak@gvrd.bc.ca; Mitch.Sokalski@gvrd.bc.ca
Subject: RE: Compliance with Metro Parks By Laws

PHOTOCOPIED

JUN 18 2010

& DISTRIBUTED

Dear Mr. Swanston, thank you for your email. I have forwarded your comments to Metro Vancouver Staff for comment.

Gayle Martin, Chair
Metro Vancouver
Park Committee

: clrstevenson@vancouver.ca; Councillor Gayle Martin

Cc: Andre.Breault@ec.gc.ca; dave.semple@richmond.ca; mayorandcouncillors@richmond.ca; jmhunt@surrey.ca

Subject: Compliance with Metro Parks By Laws

June 17th 2010.

Ms. Gayle Martin & Directors
Metro Parks Committee
Metro Vancouver Regional Board

Mayor & Council
Richmond B.C.



Dear Madam and Sirs; I wish to bring to your attention a safety issues with respect to the action taken by Dog Owners at Iona Metro Park. Do to Years of neglect in enforcement of the On Leash Parks Bylaws and the practice of "Voluntary Compliance", To Parks Bylaws with no real consequences to ignoring the basic rules and control of dogs within the Park. We have numerous persons that come to this Park with the clear intent to walk there dogs off leash. The incredible thing is that this underscores to total failure of the principles of a Dog Of Leash Area's ! As the people that visit this Park to run their dogs off leash. MUST go out of there way to do so ! They have to travel PAST the LARGE RIVER FRONT Off Leash Park! Acres of PRIME RIVERFRONT Owned by the citizens of Richmond . With a PRIME dog bathing beach and a LARGE open area for running and play ! They have to drive further right past this expensive off leash Park Each and EVERY one of them ! There are NO residences near by Iona Park !

Iona Metro Park and surrounding areas has NUMEROUS wildlife enhancement features ! Hundreds of THOUSANDS of dollars have gone into the creation of Migratory Bird Habitat ! Hundreds if not thousands of dollars have gone into interpative signs here over the Years . Signs are posted through out the areas outlining the requirement to Leash Dogs , Bird Nesting signs warning Park Users to be on the look out for Young Birds On the Ground , Leash Your Dogs . All this is IGNORED ! WHY NOT ! There is no one there to write a ticket . If there is No Respect Shown by the Owner of the Property

06/18/2010

WHY would a visitor respect the area !

I watched as one of the Dogs pictured here was in FULL pursuit of a Nesting and territorial shore bird a Killdeer a Ground nesting Migratory Bird ! As the Killdeer attempted to LURE the intruding off leash dog from it's Nest or Young ! It is now Waterfowl nesting season Ducks nest in the High grass areas transport the young from area to area Dogs can and do harass and kill them . Most times the owner whom will be far off will not be aware ! The dog seen pictured bounding at roosting Migratory Birds was seen on a previous day inside a heavily posted " SENSITIVE " area near the ponds were numerous Migratory Birds are nesting in reeds and marsh areas ! It was running totally out of control !
SIGNS ALONE, WITHOUT ENFORCEMENT DO NOT WORK PERIOD

What Makes this situation- VERY troublesome is unlike other areas. When Dogs run and scare the hundreds of Herons, Gulls, Ducks, Terns and shorebirds to the delight of the NUMBED BRAINED OWNERS . These vast flocks of Migratory Birds Fly UP INTO THE PATH OF ARRIVING JETS ! This poses a VERY big hazard to aircraft safety ! Do to the VERY shallow nature of the area between the North Arm Breakwater and the Iona Sewage Jetty . Dogs particularly Large dogs can run a GREAT DISTANCE through the shallows ! And some people actually encourage their dogs to pursue these flocks . Wednesday when I was out doing surveys I could hear two persons actively yelling at there dogs commanding them to get the birdies! A flock of noisy Caspian Terns and Bonaparte Gulls numbering about 160 Well over toward the Iona Jetty and the actively used jet approach way . This area is very MUCKY and unpleasant to walk! Yet These People went out of there way to set their animals on these Noisy birds WHY ??? Much of the area near the North Arm Breakwater beach is pleasant to walk on at low tide ! WHY go out of there way for the THRILL of harassing this flock !

Birds which land and feed in the adjacent airport areas are subject to harassment by continuous patrols. Many Birds ARE KILLED, SHOT IN THIS AREA , So there is a direct consequence for the birds that are forced from the Iona Park and Beach Area. Year ROUND THEY ARE SHOT or HARASSED IN THE AIRPORT AREAS AND NEAR THE RUNWAYS OUTSIDE THE FENCED AREAS ! I do NOT question this practice I wish there was another way ! But thousands of birds are KILLED each Year regrettably in the name of SAFETY

One solution is to BAN DOGS FROM THIS PARK SIMPLE And enforce it ! SIMPLE ! You drive right by a VERY big off leash Park The Tax Payers of Richmond have provided you this area at GREAT expense Yet Dog Owners ignore it ??? Clearly there is no effort by dog owners to control or leash their animals inside the Iona Metro Park Area . Today of the 12 Dogs observed ONE OLD DECREPIT DOG WAS SEEN ON LEASH [Being Pulled around]! WHY have a bylaw with No Enforcement ? Yesterday I was there for hours and obs No Dogs On LEASH NOT ONE ! An astounding .8 % compliance rate for today ! Just WHY bother with all that signage ?

Yours Richard Swanston #309 5545 15 B Delta B.C. V4M 2H2

cc Ms. Mary Jordon Chairperson Vancouver Airport Authority