

Minutes of PPPAC Meeting – Thursday, Jun 8, 2006

Present – Anne West, Janet Kitz, Gus Reed, Art Sampson, John Charles, Stewart MacMillan, Peter Bigelow, Allan Robertson.

Regrets – Councillor Sue Uteck, Phil Read, Tammy Morley.

Absent – Mayor Peter Kelly, Vivek Tomar.

1) Public communications regarding delay in Park renewal – It was reported that the delay was both budget-induced (loss of staff positions) and due to the lack of a project manager. Now that the PPP Project Manager position has been confirmed and John Charles has been appointed on a temporary basis, staff are in a position to begin work with the consulting firm on creation of the Master Plan (and the subsequent Management Plan and Operational Plan). Sufficient funds have been allocated to support the consulting efforts.

Regarding the Committee's intended letter to Mayor Kelly about the delay, it was agreed the letter should be modified to reflect the appointment of a Project Manager, to request the Mayor's opinion on the PPPAC Terms of reference, and to include a request for a meeting with the Mayor.

It was agreed that the PPP website would be updated to reflect the appointment of John Charles as Project Manager and to outline other recent activities regarding Park renewal. The updated information would also be produced in brochure format for distribution within PPP.

It was agreed that staff would develop other public communication initiatives.

It was agreed that Allan Robertson would accept a request by Halifax Magazine to be interviewed on the issue of Park renewal.

2) Maintenance Issues – a number of concerns faced by Art Sampson in handling Park maintenance were outlined, including scarce human and financial resources, problems with crusher dust and gravelled sections of roads after heavy rains, Park users who object to log remnants on the forest floor, and the general lack of direction while waiting for the Master Plan (which is expected to contain appropriate maintenance procedures and to specify necessary human and financial resources). Road maintenance is mainly an issue of limited human and financial resources. A decade ago, Park maintenance staff totalled six permanent and four seasonal workers; now it's five permanent and two seasonal workers. With 30 weeks of vacation time taken during the warm weather, it's effectively four permanent and two seasonal workers.

While waiting for the Master Plan, it was suggested that interim measures should be taken to deal with road maintenance, drainage, erosion control, and similar issues. This approach was strongly supported. A publicity campaign outlining the approach was recommended, and it was agreed that staff would contact the consultants preparing the Master Plan quickly to work together to prescribe appropriate interim measures while the Plan is under preparation.

Other operational issues included the muscle-car and hot-bike gatherings during the early evenings in the lower parking lot, dissolution of the Park Patrol and subsequent handling of Park policing issues directly by HRM Police, and inappropriate signage at some entrances and on the snack bar in the lower parking lot. Regarding the parking lot gatherings, there apparently is a Police plan to close the parking lot gates at 8:30PM – well before many legitimate Park users would normally leave. Committee members discussed alternate suggestions, including relocating the activities (to the Exhibition Centre parking lot?), possibly with enticements.

3) Proposal from Friends of PPP – FPPP has proposed sponsoring, organizing and operating a volunteer task force under the auspices and direction of the PPPAC to assist with interim protective measures, to help with benchmark bio-physical surveys in association with the Master Plan, and to assist with appropriate initiatives once the Master Plan has been completed. A copy of the proposal is attached as Addendum 1.

The proposal was supported, subject to a guarantee that volunteers would work under the direction of appropriate subject-matter specialists to eliminate the possibility of unintentional damage. There was concern that the proposed timeframe was very tight (it includes a planned PPPAC-FPPP public announcement of the initiative on June 28). It was agreed that staff would work with FPPP representatives to flesh out the initiative, and that PPPAC members would have an opportunity to approve or suggest modifications to the resulting concept by email prior to any announcement.

4) PPPAC Terms of Reference – the Committee’s Terms of Reference were fine-tuned. The latest version will be emailed to members for review. *A request of staff – Please indicate the correct section number of the HRM Act under which the Committee is established.*

ADDENDUM 1

Friends in the Park

It is proposed that the Friends of Point Pleasant Park sponsor, organize and operate a new volunteer task force to put into effect elements of the Park Master Plan, receive donations of support, and engage in work on those areas which have been identified as most at risk through erosion or inappropriate rebound growth after Hurricane Juan.

The principles would involve a stewardship concept, with at least a year's commitment to a particular 'plot', integration of 'clean up' and 'damage control' efforts with the new Master Plan, a survey of current conditions (to serve as benchmarks for renewal efforts under the Master Plan), and planning work on a new water course and wetland plan for the Park. The initiative would be operated under the auspices of the PPPAC, and all work would be directed by appropriate subject matter specialists and carried out in concert with Park maintenance personnel.

The concept could integrate efforts of volunteers and other not-for-profit organizations such as the Ecology Action Centre, as well as mounting a fund-raising campaign and receiving corporate donations and sponsorships in kind which could utilize the Friends’ not-for-profit status.

Proposed timing:

Approval in principle of the PPPAC	Jun, 2006
Consideration and approval at FPPP AGM	Jun 27, 2006
Joint PPPAC/FPPP public announcement	Jun 28, 2006
Operational planning and identification of volunteers	Aug 30, 2006
Commencement of operations	Sep 16, 2006

A motion to ask the PPPAC to support the initiative was unanimously passed at an executive meeting of the Friends of Point Pleasant Park on June 7, 2006. Dr. Iain Taylor, President asks that the PPPAC support the initiative.