

POINT PLEASANT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

September 5, 2013

PRESENT: Mr. Don Awalt, Vice Chair
Ms. Nancy Vanstone
Ms. Paula Minnikin
Mr. Aaron Windsor
Ms. Helen Sinclair
Ms. Annette Harrt
Mr. Peter Duinker

REGRETS: Mr. Duncan Morum, Chair
Ms. Lisa Olie
Mr. Will Gregory
Councillor Waye Mason

STAFF: Mr. Stephen Rice, Supervisor of Major Parks
Ms. Julie Vandervoort, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Awalt, Vice Chair, assumed the Chair and called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

New members were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves and their particular interest in the Park and the Committee.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 6, 2013

MOVED by Ms. Sinclair, seconded by Mr. Windsor that the minutes of June 6, 2013 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

The Committee agreed that the Order of Business be changed to allow the presentations listed under item 7 to follow item 4.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

7.1 Presentation from Dave Lane regarding Urban Star Park for Halifax

Mr. Dave Lane, Mr. Dave Chapman and Mr. Quinn Smith, representing St. Mary's University and the Halifax chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) of Canada, informed the Committee that the St. Mary's Observatory is being enlarged and upgraded with a new telescope. They noted that this could be an opportunity to explore with PPPAC and HRM the possibility of an Urban Star Park in some portion of Point Pleasant Park, preferably near the Prince of Wales Tower. In response to questions, they added the following:

- the goal is to provide an urban space where the public can observe the night sky without glare/light pollution
- the RAS is interested in collaborating on public education/outreach evenings during specific sky events; similar events in Kejimikujik National Park have been very popular (the Dark Sky program in non-urban parks is different but related)
- the initial response from Parks Canada regarding the use of the Prince of Wales site has been positive
- there are two Urban Star parks in Canada (St. John and Victoria); it is the municipality that requests the designation and the local RAS assists with the application

The Committee entered into a discussion on Park closing hours, long-term tree growth and the impact on sightlines, the process to book events and the possibility of special

event permits for parking lot use after dark. Members expressed enthusiasm for the idea and invited the delegates to return to a future PPPAC meeting to continue the discussion.

7.2 Presentation from Andrew Hayes regarding cyclists in the Park

Mr. Hayes introduced himself as one of the founders of the Halifax Cycling Coalition and noted that he was surprised by the response in the Park User Survey that six per cent of visitors arrived by bike. He stated that the per cent is much higher for other city destinations and the survey results prompted him to examine the location, the number and the condition of bike parking options at Park entrances. He added that he was attending the PPPAC meeting to request updated and additional bike racks. Mr. Stephen Rice, Supervisor of Major Parks, agreed to do an inventory and to consider improving the location of one rack and providing additional racks. He also suggested that Mr. Hayes call 311, describe his findings, and put in a service request.

7.3 Presentation from Halterm regarding working with Point Pleasant Park

Ms. Brenda Keddy, General Manager, Health, Safety Security and Environment, provided a presentation on the recent formation at Halterm of an environmental management system and a sustainability committee. Ms. Keddy noted that one of Halterm's goals is to measure, analyze and then reduce its environmental impact on its HRM neighbours, including the Park. She added that Halterm is interested in working with the Park in ways that the PPPAC and Park staff identify as useful, including such possibilities as assistance with beach and parking lot clean-up and security, reduced light pollution, storage sheds, volunteers for events, and other forms of sponsorship. She also noted that she would be available to attend PPPAC meetings on a regular basis, to keep the Committee informed of Halterm's progress and to continue to share ideas on collaboration.

The Committee expressed its appreciation and interest in working with Ms. Keddy and invited her to attend the PPPAC meeting on October 3, 2013.

The Committee then returned to its regular Order of Business.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/STAFF UPDATES

5.1 Debrief, Shilling Ceremony

Mr. Windsor provided the Committee with a summary of the event and described some "lessons learned" for the 2014 ceremony. He noted that more media involvement was needed and that a dress rehearsal of the event would be helpful. He added that a detailed schedule for the Mayor and the Lieutenant-Governor (with speaking times) was also needed as well as clearly marked and assigned seating for dignitaries. He recognized that liaison with the military earlier in the year prior to the ceremony could help with the provision of a military band. He also acknowledged the support of Parks

Canada and noted that, again, with more lead time, Parks Canada staff could likely provide even more assistance.

The Committee expressed their great appreciation of Mr. Windsor's initiative and work on the Shilling ceremony. Members entered into a discussion of whether to link the ceremony next year to a local charity or another Park event and what needs to be considered in these choices, including protocol for the Mayor and Lieutenant-Governor. Members also expressed interest in seeing the photographs taken by HRM staff during the event and suggested that some of the photographs could be posted on the Park website.

5.2 Update from Stephen Rice, Supervisor of Major Parks

Mr. Rice informed the Committee that Mr. John Simmons, Acting Superintendent of Parks, was unable to attend and that Mr. Rice would provide an update for both himself and Mr. Simmons.

Mr. Rice then noted the following:

- the repairs (from winter damage) to the Gatekeeper's Lodge were on track and the 2014 artists-in-residence should be able to access or work from the building in the spring
- the Office and Maintenance Building was receiving energy-efficient upgrades
- some overgrown paths were being cleared and widened
- the three-year knotwood suppression study area was now sodded and re-seeded
- events in the Park have increased from 87 in 2012 to 115 in 2013 (to date)
- staff are concentrating on road repair due to recent heavy rains
- an HRM document on Park improvements will be posted on the Park website when the document is completed

In response to Committee feedback, Mr. Rice agreed that he would look into what information might be added to the Park website regarding improvements that have been (or will be) undertaken as a result of the suggestions from residents gathered during the Park User Survey.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS -- NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

These items were dealt with earlier, see page 3.

8. REPORTS -- NONE

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 By-law enforcement

The Committee requested that follow-up on By-law enforcement return to the October PPPAC meeting as an agenda item.

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -- NONE

11. NEXT MEETING – October 3, 2013

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6: 10 p.m.

Julie Vandervoort
Legislative Assistant