

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

POINT PLEASANT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE NOTES

April 14, 2011

PRESENT: Mr. Duncan Morum, Chair
Mr. Don Awalt, Vice Chair
Mr. Harald Norve
Ms. Lisa Olie
Mr. Chris Crowell

REGRETS: Mr. Murray Wilson
Councillor Sue Uteck

STAFF: Mr. Stephen Rice, Supervisor of Major Parks
Mr. John Charles, HRM Planner, Real Property Planning
Mr. Rudy Vodicka, Coordinator, Real Property Planning
Ms. Nicole May, Landscape Architect, Real Property Planning
Ms. Pam Lovelace, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm in the Maintenance Building, Point Pleasant Park without quorum present.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 11, 2011

Approval of February 11, 2011 minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

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

Guest, Mr. Walter Thompson was invited to speak first on coyotes. See page 6.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES/STAFF UPDATES

4.1 Business Arising

None.

4.1.1 June weekend re: Shilling Ceremony, Artists in Residence, Beach opening

Mr. Morum spoke with Councillor Uteck about linking the June 25 and 26 weekend with a kick off event for Volunteers in the Park. Mr. Morum suggested publicity is needed to promote all the events during the weekend.

4.1.2 Follow up re: Enforcement of By-law A-300 – Respecting Animals and Responsible Pet Ownership

Mr. John Charles, Planner, provided an update on By-law A-300, including warnings and citations issued during the months of January – March 2011.

The Committee entered a discussion with the following comments noted:

- Mr. Charles noted that due to a step up of patrols, dog owners have expressed frustration that the officers are in the Park too frequently. The intent is to educate dog owners on acceptable use of the Park.
- Mr. Morum suggested officers get out of their vehicles and engage with the public more.
- Mr. Charles explained the difference between Animal Services Officers and Park Patrol. Park patrol rarely get out of the vehicles because they are on a tight schedule and it is not their job to enforce By-law A-300.
- Ms. Olie asked if there is liaison between Park Patrol and Animal Services, and suggested communications between the two groups would be beneficial.

- Mr. Morum suggested that more publicity is required to inform the public of By-law A-300 and that perhaps information should be handed out during dog licensing.
- Mr. Charles noted that the information is on the HRM website.
- Mr. Morum requested a review of the off-leash areas to deem whether or not the times and extent are reasonable. The Committee suggested that they may not be appropriate and would like to see the areas and times reduced.
- Mr. Norve added that it is difficult for visitors to come to the Park there are so many dogs and many of them are not controlled by their owners.
- Mr. Charles requested that people call HRM's 490-4000 telephone number to lodge a complaint.
- Committee members pointed out to staff that most people do not call that line to complain because those complaints do not seem to make any difference.
- Mr. Stephen Rice, Supervisor of Major Parks, suggested that it would be helpful for the Off-Leash Committee to meet and review the parameters of the off-leash areas, although a public survey may be necessary to warrant any changes to the times or areas.

Mr. Chris Crowell arrived at 5:50pm.

Mr. Charles agreed to provide an update to the Committee when the Off-Leash Committee meets again, which will likely be sometime this spring.

4.1.3 2011 Work Plan

Mr. Rudy Vodicka, Coordinator, Real Property Policy, presented an update on project deadlines for the Park. He reported that the federal government has extended some of the stimulus monies to the fall. There is a significant amount of work to undertake this spring.

Ms. Nicole May, Landscape Architect, told the Committee that the Pine Road project came in under budget and well within allotted time.

Ms. May explained the kiosk project process indicating that the first of 5 kiosks will be installed at Black Rock Beach sometime in June. Installation is estimated to be completed by the end of the summer.

Ms. May told the Committee that the Audio Tour Markers project is in process. Staff are looking for ideas on how to produce the podcasts. Staff acknowledged that the project has been slow moving due to a lack of resources.

4.1.4 Volunteers in the park

Deferred to next meeting.

4.2 Staff Updates

4.2.1 Tree Planting Program

Mr. Rice noted that no trees are currently scheduled to be planted this year. However, a woman did offer to donate trees or money for trees, and the Friends of Point Pleasant Park accepted that gift.

4.2.2 Construction

This item was discussed under 4.1.3 Work Plan 2011 on page 4.

4.2.3 Fortification Stabilization

This item was discussed under 4.1.3 Work Plan 2011 on page 4.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Petitions - None

6.3 Presentations - None

7. REPORTS

7.1 Committee Members Reports

7.1.1 Coyotes – Chair

Guest, Mr. Walter Thompson came gave a brief description of his recent experience with a coyote in the Park. He expressed concern for the safety of visitors to the Park and disappointment with the seemingly lack of action on the part of the provincial Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Mr. Thompson suggested that the presence of coyotes is a matter of a risk assessment and that the urban park should not fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial wildlife regulations due to the unique characteristics of the Park. Mr. Thompson asserted that Point Pleasant Park is not a wildlife park and therefore should be treated differently. He suggested that the Halifax Regional Municipality should take action by formulating a policy to deal with coyotes.

Mr. Morum told Mr. Thompson that HRM is reviewing the issue and Councillor Uteck has been in touch with DNR.

To be proactive on the issue, the Advisory Committee drafted a note to staff as follows:

The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee request staff to report on development of HRM policy towards coyotes in PPP and whether or not the DNR regulations should be acted upon in a different way due to the urban nature of Point Pleasant Park. The committee is concerned that the DNR policy requires a significant degree of interaction and possible danger to humans, and of particular concern to children, before any action is taken.

Ms. Olie expressed concern over the possibility of a coyote feeling cornered should it become enclosed by many people surrounding it on all sides of the Park. There is a very little window for the animal to escape. Ms. Olie agreed that the urban park should be treated as a special case.

7.1.2 Publicity – Chair

Discussion on publicity was not covered.

8. ADDED ITEMS - NONE

9. NEXT MEETING – May 12, 2011

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 pm.

Pam Lovelace
Legislative Assistant