

## BCRPA Region 2 Monthly Meeting Notes

**Meeting Date:** January 19, 2011

**Attendees:** Dave Turner: CNV, Heather Muter: BCRPA, Todd Gross: POCO, Kathy Reinheimer: Coquitlam, Marty Benson: City of Surrey, Gerhard Vandenbosch: City of Surrey, Dave Snider: Chilliwack, Dan Henegar: West Vancouver, Denis Legroulx: City of Surrey, Len Walters: City of Langley

1. Noted that our current Chair Shirley McKell is off on a leave until March, therefore Marty Benson filled in as Chair and Dave Turner stepped in to take the notes. Marty will continue to Chair the meetings until Shirley returns and the note taking responsibility will alternate.
2. Reviewed previous meeting notes. Taking notes rather than formal minutes was reviewed. Everyone is ok with the notes approach.
3. Gerhard would like to add a survey at Spring Training regarding potential for formal meetings for structural foremen and supervisors three times a year.
4. Todd will provide information on a CPSI course.

### **Topic for Discussion: Security in Parks**

- Discussion started around cost of installing and maintaining locks, opening and closing gates and how does that compare to not having barriers.
- The municipalities who have tested going with no barriers are finding it to be positive.
- Coquitlam for example have very few gates and very little perimeter fencing. So far they have had very few issues. Once in a while a kid drives into a park and does a few doughnuts but the cost savings by not maintain gates and locks etc. far outweigh the costs to repair the odd bit of vandalism.
- There appears to be a psychological factor. The fences and barriers create a challenge and an impression that it isn't safe. Take away the barriers and the area seems safer. Taking down fences make it friendlier.
- A couple of municipalities have taken the 'let's make it bulletproof' approach. One manager has moved from a municipality that had the enclosure approach to a municipality that has very few fences and barriers. He said about twice a year someone does a doughnut but there really isn't a problem.
- Surrey is now experimenting with opening gates 24 hours a day. They want to see how it goes.
- Leaving gates open can save money in overtime that went it locking gates and can put it into something more constructive and productive.
- Reducing barriers seems to reduce vandalism.
- Langley found that there are people living next to some parks who insist that gates be locked at certain times to prevent people from partying beside their homes.
- Another manager found that the gates don't really stop the kids from coming into an area.
- The manager in Chilliwack found that they have to lock the gates along the Veder Trail at the right time or the partiers move in.
- One manager gives a key to the neighbour who lives beside the park. It's in his interest to lock the gates at the correct time to keep the partiers out and there is no overtime cost to the municipality.

- One manager noticed that local people care more about their parks than parks located out in remote areas. Remote areas need more protection.
- In Surrey City Centre at Holland Park and Whalley the parking lots have been left open for several years and there hasn't been a problem. Testing has been going on for three weeks at additional locations to explore results. There haven't been any dumping issues. The cost of gating and locking services has come down.
- For some managers the automatic locking systems just aren't working. They have gone back to having their buildings locked by gatekeepers.
- Some municipalities are having their gates and washrooms locked by private companies and it's working well.
- One municipality is looking into hiring a company to lock gates and don't have their staff work beyond 8 PM.
- One municipality has a company do all the caretaking of their buildings but a separate security company to lock the buildings. This keeps the caretakers from having to confront homeless people etc.
- One municipality has a towing company lock their gates and will tow people if they are still in the parking lot after closing time.
- In Surrey they installed signs about who to call if you get locked in and a cost to get someone to open the gate. Before the signs went in the Manager would get called 6 or 7 times a year. After the signs went in he might get 1 call a year. When users get their car locked into an area there is a number to call and a \$60 charge to get their car let out.
- In one municipality fast response to graffiti has reduced vandalism and reduced graffiti.
- Wire theft seems to be more of an issue. It almost seems like it's organized in that no sooner does a new lighting system go in than its being stolen.
- Homeless is also a big problem now.
- In Coquitlam there is a group called 'Hope for Freedom' that step in and help out the homeless people therefore having people take up residence in washroom buildings isn't a problem and they are able to go with the automatic locking system.
- Surrey on the other hand is removing the automatic systems and having someone go around and lock the buildings, otherwise the homeless figure out how to beat the automatic system and move into the buildings.
- Chilliwack use an annoying sound buzzer when the building is locked to keep homeless from wanting to move into the buildings, in Surrey the homeless vandalised the building until they could get at the buzzer.
- North Surrey area now has 0 live in Caretakers and things are working out.
- One municipality is looking into a card swipe system since stolen keys are a problem. They are looking to the Real Estate industry for direction since they are most on top of this.
- Public safety will drive the move to swipe cards due to liability issues.
- The multi lock system is expensive and only guaranteed for three years.
- One municipality is using security guards when they put in new lighting systems to prevent them from stealing the wire, another is using heavy duty lock boxes and placing very large boulders on top of the boxes, a third is putting in deep boxes and placing the wires underneath a false mortar bottom so when the vandals break they're looking into an empty box with no wires.

### **BCRPA**

- Symposium is May 11 to 13<sup>th</sup> [http://bcrpa.bc.ca/training\\_symposium/symposium/2011.htm](http://bcrpa.bc.ca/training_symposium/symposium/2011.htm)

- There is a pre-symposium regional parks gathering May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The symposium is being held at the Richmond Oval and by the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel.
- There are continuing education credits available for spring training  
[http://bcrpa.bc.ca/recreation\\_parks/parks/documents/continuing\\_education\\_credits\\_list\\_2011.pdf](http://bcrpa.bc.ca/recreation_parks/parks/documents/continuing_education_credits_list_2011.pdf)
- There is a one day playground safety awareness course February 10 in Langley  
[http://bcrpa.bc.ca/recreation\\_parks/parks/PlaygroundSafetyTraining.htm](http://bcrpa.bc.ca/recreation_parks/parks/PlaygroundSafetyTraining.htm)
- The Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) information is available on the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) website  
[http://cptra.ca/UserFiles/File/CPSI\\_forms/CPSI%20Port%20Coquitlam%20Spring\\_11.pdf](http://cptra.ca/UserFiles/File/CPSI_forms/CPSI%20Port%20Coquitlam%20Spring_11.pdf)
- Note that Spring Training is at the **Langley Events Centre** NOT the Casino this year.
- Gerhard will draft up a Spring Training evaluation form this year to see if the foremen, trades gardeners, lead hands would like to meet three times per year. This could be a good initiative and especially for the structural people who don't have any organization at this time. Gerhard to send the details to Heather. Ask the Managers to send in the structure of their staff divisions. For example City of North Vancouver structure would be: Horticulture, Facilities, Arboriculture, Turf and Trails, 'Administration, Design and Environment'.
- Heather will be going off on leave and her job will be filled at the end of March.

#### **Topic for Discussion: Artificial Turf Snow Removal**

- Coquitlam: Clubs need to let the Municipality know when they might need to have snow cleared. The municipality only agrees to try but don't guarantee they can remove the snow since much depends on the conditions at the time.
- Some municipalities just say no, they don't remove snow.
- City of North Van and POCO both try since it affects revenues from field bookings.
- One municipality said it can be a liability problem if ice forms.
- Talk moved to signage when there is ice. Abbotsford has signs saying sidewalks are slippery when slippery signs, basically idiot signs but at least some warning.
- Talked moved to ice on ponds. Variety of signs are used from no signs to beware of thin ice to danger deep water signs.
- One municipality has a policy to install signs when ice forms.

#### **Round Table**

- **Coquitlam**
  - Coquitlam is conducting cyclical reviews of Departments.
  - Has led to reorganization of Department from Leisure and Parks to Parks Recreation and Culture.
  - Park Facilities now one division.
  - ¼ of management staff positions are vacant or retiring.
  - Many people moving on due to organizational change.
- **POCO**
  - Pilot recycling program underway.
  - Using all bear aware containers.
  - Eco Media containers in downtown core.

- Bear containers have totes that slide into them.
- Will report back to Council on costs.
- Using high functioning hand dryers now rather than paper towels.
- Looking into food recycling pilot projects.
- Using clear plastic bags to audit garbage.
- **CNV**
  - Dog waste in the garbage stream is becoming an issue for Metro Vancouver.
  - We have been turned back at the transfer station a few times. People are looking for solutions to this problem.
- **Langley**
  - They are using a company K9 Community Clean who supply complimentary dog bags in exchange for advertising opportunities on the bags and kiosk. They provide a 3 month supply of bags and will supply dispensers if needed, and they re-stock the dispensers.
  - No longer needs to deal with the complaints. Very happy with the program.
  - Saved \$6,000.
  - New staff criminal check can take months if a person gets flagged.
- **Surrey**
  - Looking into colours to see which are vandalised the least. They are changing their colours from close to the light or dark ends of the spectrum (eg. Black, white or yellow) to more neutral, in the middle of the spectrum colours. There has been a huge reduction in graffiti since the graffiti doesn't show up very well on neutral colours which defeats the purpose of the vandal to make a bold statement. They have tried it in quite a few locations and have found a significant drop off in graffiti. They don't like to tag mid range colours.
  - Also corrugated surfaces like board and baton work better at reducing graffiti than smooth surfaces.
  - Also galvanized steel holds up better for a long time than painted steel or other finishes. Galvanized doesn't give the initial flash for the first two or three years but 15 years down the road you will be happy you went that route.
  - A covered youth park is being built.
  - Hopefully our June meeting will be held there. It is unique and will be interesting to see.
  - They are hiring a consultant to look into dog off leash areas. Looking at all aspects.
  - They are going to use rubber tree rings to keep weeds down. 5,000 are being installed this year.
  - Surrey is celebrating 25 years of volunteerism this year. 45,000 to 60,000 volunteers in that time.
- **West Vancouver**
  - In budget process, hopefully passes on Monday.
  - The new artificial turf field will be opening in April.
- **Chilliwack**
  - Working on a new greenspace plan. They hired a long serving planner who had retired and are very happy since he knows the intricacies of the municipality.
  - Have a look when the project is complete. It could be a good model for others to follow.

## General Discussion

- The lack of an education stream for parks people to move up the ladder compared to other professionals was discussed. The other professionals are then moving up the ladder over parks people. We're doing our profession a disservice unless we address this. People recall when a few people in Recreation took on this professional education and profession approach and it has paid big dividends for Recreation people. Other professions have done this as well.