



High Park Community Advisory Council  
Box 108, 95 Lavinia Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6S 3H9

## HPCAC COUNCIL MEETING Minutes

Wednesday 6:30 pm

May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010

The regular HPCAC Council Meeting was held at the Howard Park Tennis Club.

### Present were:

Robin Sorys	Member-at-large, Chair
LeeAnn Janissen	Interim Secretary
John Cleary	Member-at-large, co-chair K9 committee
Sharon Lovett	Co-chair, Natural Environment Committee
Barrie Thomson	Treasurer
Rastia'ta'non:ha (David Redwolf)	Taiaiaiko'n Historical Preservation Society
Jerry Hodge	Member-at-large, Chair Building, infrastructure and safety committee
Bernard Sanders	Member-at-large
Karyn Morris	Member-at-large
Paul Wehrle	Member-at-large
Jorge Ture	Park Supervisor
Gloria Worth	Park Watch
Cheryl Hart	Colborne Lodge
Wendy Rothwell	
Samuel Zemicael	Office of Councillor Bill Saundercook
Shawn Verge	
Alan Crawford	Parks and Recreation
Mike Correa	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

### Regrets from:

Robin Sorys took the chair at 6:40 pm

## 1. Introductions/Adoption of Agenda

We went through a round of introductions of all those present. Alan Crawford, Mike Correa and Shawn Verge were in attendance to discuss the extended license-free fishing proposal.

## 2. Declarations of conflict of interest

None

### **3. Minutes of the previous meeting (February, March, and April 2010)**

#### **Motion:**

Barrie Thomson / John Cleary

“Approval of the HPCAC minutes for April 2010.”

**Motion carried**

#### **Motion:**

John Cleary / Barry Thomson

“Approval of the HPCAC minutes for Feb 24<sup>th</sup> and March 24<sup>th</sup>.”

**Motion carried**

### **4. Treasurer’s Report**

Not presented

### **5. Business arising from the minutes**

None

### **6. New Business**

#### **6.1. Extended license free fishing**

Alan, Mike and Shawn presented the case for allowing license free fishing in High Park for an extended period of time beyond the 1 week around the annual Family Fishing Day. They talked about the positive benefits of encouraging the experience of fishing including a greater awareness of nature, self-confidence in young people and an overall increased sensitivity to conservation issues. The idea would be to create a space in Toronto that was easily accessible by the TTC where young people and new Canadians could learn to fish responsibly. If this space was encouraged and promoted, a community of interested fishers would develop and the area would become essentially self-policing.

Mike from TRCA re-iterated his position in his letter (see HPCAC April minutes) that the fish stocks of Grenadier pond could easily support an increase in fishing. In answer to a question about damage to other species spawning habitats, Mike said that most of those habitats were on the western and northern shores of the pond, which are inaccessible to fishers from High Park, and so there shouldn’t be too much of an impact.

Some council members expressed concerns about the impact to the shoreline of a large increase of fishers in the area, about monofilament lines not being properly disposed of, about the impact to other non-fish species, and about the use of live bait and the resulting contamination.

Council members also asked for more details on what kind of signage would be displayed and how the proposal would support its educational goals. Council expressed concern that if the area was promoted as a free-for-all for fishing then large numbers of inexperienced fishers would show up with no support to teach them how to respect the environment and fish responsibly.

Alan et al. responded that this was a chicken-and-egg problem, and expressed confidence that a fishing community would develop organically once barriers to fishing were removed. They also point out that the current by-laws are not enforced very effectively, and a self-policing community would be an improvement.

Council proposed an interim step towards building a support infrastructure to educate new fishers. Council proposes 1 day a month for the summer where volunteer fishers would be on site and available for mentoring and guiding responsible fishing. Council also requests that signage would go up with information on disposing filament, and other safety information.

Council offered to strike an ad-hoc committee to work through the details of implementing this proposal.

Alan et al. had reservations about the ability to find willing volunteers, but will consider the proposal.

Sam Zemichael said Bill Saundercook's office is working on getting signage. Councillor Saundercook's office will co-ordinate a follow-up discussion.

## **6.2. Letter about illegal bike ramps – Robyn Sorys**

Robyn read a proposed letter from HPCAC outlining council's objections to the illegal bike ramps around Snake Mound. This letter will be sent to several city councillors' offices as well as to the local division of the police.

### **Motion:**

Karyn Morris / Sharon Lovett

"Motion to approve the HPCAC letter regarding illegal bike ramps."

### **Motion carried**

## **7. Reports/Updates**

### **7.1. High Park Supervisor – Jorge Ture**

The work on Parkside will be done by the 1<sup>st</sup> week in June.

The off-leash trail work will be starting soon. Please see [highpark.org](http://highpark.org) for details and maps of the project.

### **7.2. Colborne Lodge - Cheryl Hart**

No update.

### **7.3. BIS Report for the May 26, 2010 meeting of HPCAC**

#### **The Parkside Slump:**

The job on the slope is almost finished. 45 augers were screwed into the bank this month to stabilize the area under the road. A heavy plastic netting was put on over the auger ends and attached to them and a 8 inches of subsoil and a foot of good loam covers the netting. The last step is a seed bed of bank-stabilizing grasses designed by Parks. In future if trees are to be introduced to the bank the netting can be cut for the insertion of tree root balls without interfering with the integrity of the bank. The last step is the restoration of the roadbed and the metal fence barriers.

Ongoing concerns:

**Use of the new construction ramp by BMXers.** That would allow them to access the stream bottom land where there are a number of exotic species of plants and a rare salamander. This is the last intact creek in the Park.

**Possible Solution:**

The filling in of the ramp with logs and branches as well as a permanent fence at the top end.

**Use of the new hillside as a ramp into the same area**

**Possible Solutions:**

Log barriers on the hillside to prevent riding down the slope and some signage

relating to rehabilitation. Perhaps a fence at the bottom of the slope or at the south edge of the construction.

The fence erected across the bottom of the creek at Spring Road was a welcome addition to protect the bottom land.

**New Signage:**

A small committee looked at signage suggested by Helen Sousa to demark roads and attractions mostly along Colborne Lodge Road. They were basically the same signage we have already in the Park. Some changes were suggested individually to Helen by committee members in both location and content. A list is available for interested members on request. (example circulated at meeting)

**Trails:**

Helen asked for some progress on trail naming. A meeting will be held with the Trails Committee before the next Council meeting to evaluate the work.

**Patio Extension at the Grenadier Restaurant:**

A concern from the last meeting was the elevated extension of the patio on the west side of the Grenadier Restaurant. An explanation of the extension was solicited from Tony, one of the Grenadier partners and the carpenter on suite.

The extension allows the expansion of the counter service and ice cream portion of the patio by moving table service to the new area from its old location on the south side to the new area formerly occupied by the Organic Market. The extension was passed by the City Building Inspector who required the lowering of the front portion of the deck by a foot to fit the code for such patios and by the tree expert who okayed the way in which the trees were to be managed. The area is within the footprint allotted to the restaurant so there are no violations of their license and the old footing and posts were reused to reduce any root damage to existing trees.

**Park History: Toronto Archives**

While looking for maps and charts of the Park to determine if any of the Trails had preexisting names, a treasure trove of 25 old maps and charts was found. Helen asked that we capture the material for archiving in the Park by photographing and possible printing some of it. Some of the charts are 8 by 6 feet in size. The work is on-going and although some of the roads have been renamed there is no evidence of any of our trails being named at all.

Among the items are detailed topographic maps from 1918, hand-drawn maps prior to 1864 and soundings from Grenadier Pond.

#### **7.4. Natural Environment Committee Report for April/May 2010**

##### **Staff changes in Urban Forestry**

Cara Webster's maternity leave begins on May 21. She has been our NE rep for a few years now. We thank her for her dedication and wish her the very best!

Jennifer Gibb has been selected to fill Cara's position during her absence. Fortunately, Jennifer is already familiar with High Park and our committee. We look forward to working with her.

##### **Park Staff Orientation**

Once the staff have settled into their new positions, we still plan to participate in a staff orientation workshop this year, and possibly a separate session for more senior staff including the new Park Supervisor.

##### **Dog-Strangling Vine Research**

We received this note from Cara on April 26:

"I wanted to let you know that Sandy Smith an entomologist from University of Toronto will be doing some research in the park this summer with Dog-strangling vine in conjunction with studies being conducted in France looking at potential biocontrol options. Jen & I just met with Sandy on Friday but she may be in the park starting tomorrow to start digging out some DSV plants from the park to bring them to a greenhouse environment at U of T. They may also set-up 2 sites in the park with plots where they are trying to mimic herbivory. I will try to get more of a project description from Sandy for your interest but for now I just wanted to let you know park users may see people digging and this has been approved."

##### **Mapping High Park**

Jennifer Kowalski of Parks Planning has provided a set of draft maps from the GPS work done last year, and asked us to review whether any features are missing. She is particularly interested in the following information:

1. Restoration/Stewardship Areas that are outside the existing ANSI boundaries
2. Culture & recreation facilities
3. Interpretive and information signage

##### **[www.highparknature.org](http://www.highparknature.org) Website**

Our website project is moving along. The latest addition is the new Bird Gallery pages, plus a lot of the material from the old test site has been moved over (more to come). Contributions are always welcome.

##### **VSP Activities:**

April 25: Boulevard Bed Cleanup - Nursery Work

May 5: Plant Sale Preparation - Greenhouse

May 9: VSP Native Plant Sale at the Greenhouse

The VSP sold almost 900 plants to 150 customers and raised \$4485. The money was collected by Patricia Landry from the City.

May 23: B.E.A.N Garlic mustard control. We collected 21 bags of garlic mustard.

## **Upcoming Planting Projects**

The Restoration Crew and the VSP will be doing more planting on Sculpture Hill on June 13. This will be the second one at that site.

Karen & Sharon

Co-Chairs, High Park Natural Environment Committee

### **7.5. K9 Committee - Tammy Reid/John Cleary**

- 1) Our regular K9 committee meeting was cancelled this month as both myself and my co-chair were away. We hope to hold a special K9 committee meeting once the details of the City's plan for the off-leash area are released to the public (see item 2).
- 2) The K9 committee is looking forward to the start of the section 37 trail improvements and wishes to remind all park users to avoid that area during the construction period. For those wishing to walk on an off-leash nature trail, part of the back allotment garden trail will remain open, although the trail will dead-end before the construction site. As always dog-owners are reminded to keep their dogs on-leash when using any of the other trails in High Park. We hope to have more posters and signs in the off-leash area to supplement those put up by the City.
- 3) The members of the off-leash working group, including the K9 representative, have been shown the draft plans for the off-leash area. The City has asked that while they are revising the plans based on the comments of the off-leash working group, that specific information stay within the group. The City seems committed to investing money (\$500,000) into the off-leash area, as well as establishing a balance between dog-owners and the natural environment. We are however concerned about the timeline for comments on the plan and want to ensure that dog-owners have sufficient notice.
- 4) The K9 committee has noted that removal of the fencing around the retention pond at the Northern section of Spring road. Replacement of the fences with something more permanent would be good for both dog-owners and the natural environment. This location would be ideal for more attractive post/paddle fencing, as it overlooks the ponds and trees.
- 5) Given the increase in traffic along Spring road during the summer and the likelihood of further increase in traffic density due to the Section 37 work, the K9 committee would like to remind all park users and bike riders especially that Spring road is a multi-use road, including off-leash and proper care should be taken by all users when using this road.

### **7.6. Interim HPCAC rep on May 12<sup>th</sup> HPI meeting**

#### **1.1.1 Humber College Projects**

Interesting projects has been completed by Humber College to evaluate the public visibility of HPI, HPCAC and Friends of High Park. The results below comprise the executive summary of the projects: A soft copy of the complete report is available from the HPI secretary on request.

Executive Summary of Humber Projects

Humber Communications Group (3 presentations)

*Background*

Students involved in a public relations course at Humber College (Lakeshore campus), choose the High Park Initiatives from a list of community organizations for consultation work. The initial briefing on the HPI and what we were expecting from the students was covered by Judy Malone in her capacity as an HPI director. Three sets of student groups then proceeded with an independent analysis of the HPI, including SWOT analysis, outlining objectives, strategies and tactics as well as evaluation of objectives. The final product was a presentation outlining this analysis for the class and HPI directors.

### *Summary*

The student group were able to capture some of the strengths and weaknesses of the HPI, as identified previously by the HPI board. There were several innovative ideas for increasing the awareness of the HPI through marketing and public relation exercises – although most would require staffing or monetary investment. Many of the ideas focused on the internet and/or creating contacts and relationships with local businesses and media. All groups identified the poor visibility of the HPI within the local community as an obvious weakness of the organization. There was considerable confusion in the presentation in terms of the goals of the projects as it related to HPI, HPCAC and Friends of High Park, particularly amongst the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> presentations.

Humber Research Group (1 presentation)

### *Background*

Students involved in a research course at Humber College (Lakeshore campus), choose the High Park Initiatives from a list of community organizations for consultation work. The initial briefing on the HPI and our research needs was covered by Judy Malone in her capacity as an HPI director. Students produced both a primary and secondary research proposal along with a draft questionnaire, which was provided to Judy's replacement – John Cleary (HPI Secretary). Working in conjunction with staff at the Nature Centre, the focus of the research was centered on Nature Centre and HPI. The survey was conducted by Humber students within High Park and surrounding community during the month of April. The final product was an summary presentation on the findings of the survey.

### *Summary*

The students captured some excellent findings regarding the placement of High Park in the minds of park users as well as some basic demographic information. Regardless of location, most users primarily viewed the park recreationally and visited a few times a month and/or. The majority had little or no awareness of the HPI and/or Friends of High Park. Interest in adult programs focused on walking tours, nature watching and environmental art, while children's program focused on summer camps, parent-child programs and nature watch. The majority of users were willing to pay a small fee (\$6-10) per programming event.

### *Recommendations*

The project is worth pursuing again next year but the message and focus of groups needs to be clear. The material from the communications group will provide ideas for potential fundraising and communications volunteers, while the research material provides basic market research for future Nature Centre programs and would be good for distribution to staff, fundraising and communications volunteers. A larger sampling of park users and a specific online survey for HPI members and visitors to Nature Centre may provide further market research.

### **1.1.2 Report on Q and A Session for HPCAC members (May 6th)**

A small group of HPCAC members met at the Training Centre to explore HPI mandates and programs. Working from briefing notes John Cleary (HPI Secretary) explained the history and function of HPI in regard to the Nature Centre, its relationship to the City and to non-profit charities in general. Questions were taken by John and Jerry Hodge as they occurred.

### **1.1.3 The Welcome Centre**

The Welcome Centre has received its staffing allocation this summer so the program can proceed. The Grenadier Group has again volunteered the space and they will do a fix-up of the roof before opening at the end of June. More materials are being prepared to add to the educational aspect of the programming. The Grenadier Group Mmaps have already produced maps as part of their menu. There may be some experimentation with the days of service by adding some Friday evening openings. Last year's signs and construction materials have been in storage so costs will be minimal.

### **1.1.4 Committee Structure for HPI (ongoing discussion)**

HPI is working on the Committee structure for the Board. A preliminary overview has been prepared by the secretary with a view to finalizing it at the next meeting. The guiding principals are that HPI is a working Board so Directors will be expected to operate working committees of volunteers in their area of expertise and report their progress regularly at Board meetings.

## **8. Other Business**

No other business.

## **9. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

**Next Meeting** - The next meeting will be held on June 23, 2010 at the Howard Park Tennis Club at 6:30 pm.