

Report of PPPAC Meeting – Thursday, Jun 14, 2007

Present – Anne West, Phil Read, Kate Greene, Janet Kitz, Allan Robertson, Stewart MacMillan, Kim Borgal, Peter Bigelow, Brian Phelan, Kevin Tulk.

Regrets – Vivek Tomar, Sue Uteck.

1) Replacement PPPAC members – Allan Robertson reported that he, Peter Bigelow, and Sue Uteck had met with Mayor Kelly, and that Mr. Kelly approved a policy where the PPPAC Chair and a selected staff member (Peter Bigelow) could review the applicants for PPPAC membership, and submit their recommendations to the Membership Selection Committee. There were five applications received to date. A meeting of the Membership Selection Committee was planned for Jun 25th, and it was hoped that Council would approve the selected candidates at the regular meeting on Jun 26th. The Mayor also approved the PPPAC's recommendation that the committee be increased in size to ten members. He suggested eleven, in fact, to make it slightly easier to obtain quorums. He also felt it might be appropriate to list suggestion areas of experience or expertise that committee members should bring. Allan agreed to prepare a modified Terms of Reference incorporating the changes. With respect to the suggestion that Janet Kitz be deemed a full, voting member rather than an Honorary member, she indicated that either designation was acceptable to her. (After the meeting she indicated to the Chair that it would probably be best for her to retain her Honorary designation, as this would allow for an additional full member to be recruited.)

2) PPP regulations and by-laws – Kevin Tulk of HR Police outlined the strategy regarding policing issues in the Park. It encourages enjoyment of the Park, promotes education through signage and the media, and mildly enforces the rules. He noted that signage indicating where and when certain activities are allowed (e.g., bicycles, dogs) is very important to their efforts. He also noted that some users seem to relax their levels of alertness when using paths (consistent with the atmosphere in the Park), and that this can lead to potential conflicts during periods of heavy use. The examples he used were unwanted attention by over-friendly dogs and some pedestrians not knowing which side of a path bicyclists will use when approaching from the rear.

3) Signage issues and policy – Brian Phelan indicated that Park signs are being reviewed, but that an entirely new system of signs was not expected to be part of the new Master Plan. HRM has been trying to reduce the number of signs in PPP, as it was felt that some signs added to address various issues over the years have resulted in too many, sometimes inconsistent, signs. New temporary signs will be placed soon indicating the new plantings.

4) Master Plan update – Stewart MacMillan indicated that staff had met with both consulting teams earlier in the week, and that by the end of June three draft sections of the Plan would be ready for PPPAC review. Four subsequent sections will be ready by early September, and a full draft Master Plan should be ready for public review in October. He asked that the PPPAC review the first three sections in early July, and it was agreed that the Committee would meet on the first Thursday of the month rather than the second (Jul 5th rather than Jul 12th). It was hoped that Council would have approved the new members by then, so that their first meeting would include the review. There will be a need for a larger meeting room than the one in the Lodge if the new members attend. Staff will arrange a venue and coordinate the meeting by email. It was felt by some that we may need a second meeting in July at the regular time – this can be determined at the Jul 5th meeting.

5) Website update – Stewart reported on efforts to update the website. All members were very impressed with the site, the new newsletter (thanks to Kate and Kim), and the addition of relevant news (planting program, stay-on-the-path notices, etc.).

6) Park usage survey – The need for a user survey was discussed, and it was agreed that the Committee would ask staff to arrange for a suitable survey to be designed and executed when time allows (likely not this summer).

7) Other items – Interviews for the new Works Supervisor are proceeding well. There are a number of good candidates. Regarding links with Shakespeare by the Sea, it was agreed that Allan and Stewart would meet with management to discuss items of mutual interest.