

Report of PPPAC Meeting – Thursday, Dec 13, 2007

Present – Anne West, Paul Doane, Kate Greene, Harald Norve, Janet Kitz, Duncan Morum, Allan Robertson, Gerrie Masters, Stewart MacMillan, Brian Phelan

Regrets – Phil Read, Vivek Tomar, Leanne Chisholm, Peter Bigelow, Stephen Rice, Sue Uteck

Venue – Point Pleasant Lodge

- 1) **Update on PPP Master Plan** – Stewart reported delays in release of the Master Plan and the Management Plan. The date for the PPPAC to receive the draft plans has been delayed from December to the end of January, with public sessions in February and March, and Council approval by March 31st.
- 2) **Planning for a PPP foundation** – The previous PPPAC received Council approval in 2005 for a Memorandum of Agreement and By-Laws for a PPP foundation. In discussion, it was suggested that an independent PPP foundation might be better. Currently, funds donated for Park restoration being held by HRM draw only a minimal amount of interest – 3% was mentioned. If even 10% could be obtained by investing professionally the approximately \$450,000 donated, the 7% difference would generate more than \$30,000 annually. Further, it was felt that a foundation independent of Council control would lend comfort to philanthropists and other PPP supporters. Regarding the need to examine the feasibility of establishing a PPP foundation with the most appropriate design and operating parameters, it was felt that the \$1 million federal donation might be used to fund the study. Stewart agreed to investigate.
- 3) **Park roads winter maintenance** – In light of recent slippery roads conditions, Committee members asked if PPP maintenance policies had changed. Brian Phelan indicated policies had not changed, but that the early onset of winter conditions may have caught staff off-guard and may explain users' concerns. He indicated Park staff try to keep at least the perimeter roads open (plowed and/or spread with crusher dust with 5% sand). Allan questioned why Stephen Rice, the Works Supervisor whose office is in the park (and who the PPPAC thought was effectively manager of Point Pleasant Park) is on night shift to supervise city snow clearing operations. Brian said that these operations take precedence, and at the end of the snow season, Stephen would revert to day-time operation. Brian said there were two employees responsible for winter maintenance, and that they handled weekends and holidays as well as weekday operation. Some members suggested the Park be closed if staff could not carry out sufficient winter maintenance. Brian said 'icy caution' signs would be installed. One member observed that the forthcoming Master Plan and Management Plan might help to address the issue. Another suggested installing web cams to make observations of conditions possible without staff needing to visit PPP during weekends and holidays to check on conditions.
- 4) **Donations of trees and other items** – Allan reported that the Friends of PPP had been asked if tree purchases for PPP could be used for carbon credits. The question of how to handle such requests was discussed, including the potential roles of a foundation and the Friends of PPP. It was suggested that the website of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew (www.kew.org) might offer suggestions. (The website includes instructions on how to support Kew's research, conservation or education work, or the physical gardens.)
- 5) **PPP website** – Stewart gave a good overview of the website and its development. In November HRM re-launched www.pointpleasantpark.ca to focus on the information needs of park visitors and people interested in the park from outside our region. The web site is built on the successful web architecture used in the PPP International Design Competition, and was adapted by HRM with the help of Internet Solutions Limited of Halifax (www.isl.ca). Content areas include: day-to-day visitor information, event listings, bookings, archive information, and park maps. The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee has its own section for posting meeting summaries. In November-December, the web site averaged around 7500 visits per month from 64 countries. One-third of the visits originated from Canada with Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Ontario being the top three provinces accessing the site.
- 6) **New arborist** – Brian reported that a new Arborist position for PPP had been filled, and the new person would begin as weather warmed up.