

General Brock Park Committee Meeting Minutes

Note: Action items in green

- Date:** Tuesday, April 24, 2007
- Location:** Cedar Springs Health, Racquet and Sports Club
- GBPC Attendees:** Amy Schnurr, Sarah Merritt-Kellogg, Katie Brown, Diane Peters, Jana Garrett
- Regrets:** Jeff Garrett
- STTOP Attendees:** Louis Fournier, Cathryn Ainslie, Ian Grant, Ken Woodruff, Rocco DeVito
- Council:** Mayor Cam Jackson, Jack Dennison
- Staff:** Tim Commisso and Sandra Young
- Guests:** Wayne Joudrie, Director of Education, Trustees Peggy Russell, Burlington and Donna Danielli, Milton

GB & STTOP pre – meeting updates:

- Ian has been successful in getting the approval of BYSC to include advertisement in the soon to be distributed Parent’s Handbook with a distribution to 7000 families. It will read:

Keep Public Lands in Public Hands

Where will your team play next year?
NOT at General Brock fields as they are to be SOLD!
Take action NOW and KEEP PUBLIC LANDS IN PUBLIC HANDS
Playing fields are at RISK

Please respond immediately. Email protectourgreenspace@hotmail.com. And please include your name and ward #

For more info contact Ian Grant, Save General Brock Committee at igrant@cogeco.ca

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- Fred Galloway (open house consultant) report summarizes recommendations /next steps including the “need for the City to act assertively to get the long term use of the park.” Committee question re: what is the City going to do about providing the “broadest possible options to resolving the General Brock Park?” as suggested in the summary?

- Katie is to write a letter to Sarah's soccer league to request funds for our continued activities. We hope that they will give us \$1000.00.

General Meeting Communications:

Around the table introductions

- Tim Commisso - has been exposed to most of the City's corporate issues in the last 18 years, and knows how passionate everyone is about this issue. He wants to get actively engaged in it now. This is an item he expects we'll be spending a lot of time on in the next few years
- The General Brock Committee is a city committee (CORE) and there's also the STTOP committee as well which are both working for similar goals.

1. Overview of April meeting with the Halton District School Board

Attendees: Peggy Russell, Trustee, Gerry Cullen, Superintendent of Facilities, Jack Dennison, Ward 4 Councillor, Tim Commisso, General Manager-Community Services, Janet Lunn, Director of Parks & Recreation, Alan Magi, Director of Roads & Parks Maintenance

- Due to the status of General Brock in 2003, the site was removed from the City/HDSB Reciprocal Agreement, which includes the maintenance and permitting of the greenspace. The City was given permission late in 2006 to permit the fields to sports users with the understanding that the permits were for 2006 only and did not guarantee permitting in 2007. Sarah M-K confirmed that her soccer club did receive an e-mail outlining this situation, but the club made the assumption that since the property was not up for sale, the park would be available for 2007. As a result, her club has had to incur an extra \$3,000 cost and are now having to play a lot in north Burlington which her club is not pleased with.
- HDSB entered into an agreement with Invictas, a for-profit organization, and will receive revenues from this agreement. Supposed to be indoor facility use only during April. The decision was carried out by HDSB operational staff as typically trustees do not hear about this type of agreement as it is not a purchase or sale.
- Discussion took place if GB could be used for soccer in between the times it's being used for football, but Janet Lunn and Alan Magi stated that a field used for football is not suitable to be used for soccer due to the wear and tear of the sod.
- Tim added that the City and Board have a good working relationship about the joint use of facilities they have between them. The City was aware that Brock wasn't going to be available this year. He apologized and said that the City should have communicated this. Parks and Rec did the allocating of the fields. Accommodation was made at other facilities for the soccer teams. Tim will be following up why the communication about this didn't happen; however, he said

it's not for the City to dictate how this facility gets used. The Board entered into an agreement with another group. And it's not the City's property, it's the Board's. Besides, there are indirect benefits for having them there, eg one of them being the passive use of the park.

- A question was asked about the feasibility of permitting the baseball diamonds at GB for public use this season. **Tim C. indicated he would check into this with P & R staff and get back to the Committee.** Trustee Russell indicated that she believed that if the City found they really needed the use of the diamonds, she would expect the HDSB staff would find a way to accommodate this.
- A question was raised as to if the city taxpayers are expected to continue to support the maintenance needs of the site if the playfields are now not available for public use. **Tim C. indicated that as the park is still available to the public for passive use, he would expect some level of maintenance would continue but that this is to be discussed and he will report back once known.**
- A question was raised as to why the playfield permits were not offered to the “public” sports groups that have been using the site for the past 40 years. Jack responded that all clubs were informed via email last year that the site would likely not be available for permits in 2007. He indicated that Janet confirmed that all group requests for permits have been accommodated at other park locations.
- Rocco clarified that while the permit requests may have been met, the fact is that the soccer clubs are short on playfields this year. There are house league teams without fields. They have permits for games only but not fields for practicing. They are scrambling for fields as a result. Also, BYSC has turned down kids who wanted to play soccer. There is a waiting list for them. So saying what was requested being accommodated isn't the same as what the need was, as these kids on the waiting list don't show up in the requests.
- Jack: Brock was declared surplus in 2003 and went through the process of being offered to other Boards and the City. But then it was pulled back off the surplus list. As a result, the SGBP/STTOP committees have both have backed off as it's not really for sale.
- But at Tuesday's meeting, Gerry C said that that will change. With respect to HDSB plans for the site, Gary Allan is using the lower floor for their adult education program. The 2nd floor is designated to accommodate two departments of the HDSB and the third floor is being used for administration for special education. It is the intent of HDSB to use the 2nd floor of Brock for administrative staff until they decide whether they will move into a regional campus building, which would probably be in the time frame of 2010 to 2012. This decision to be part of the regional campus would probably be made in the next 4 months. If the HDSB decides against the campus, they will have to make other stand-alone plans for their desperately needed admin. facilities, which will still take significant time.

- Wayne J. commented that the City of Burlington is the preferred purchaser when General Brock goes back up for sale. Katie B. asked Wayne to review the Education Act policy and get back to the committee as the Act indicates that if 3 years and 90 days has passed since the original date of property deemed surplus, then the process must begin again and other educational institutions (i.e. the Catholic Board), would be offered the site again. **Wayne indicated that he did think this was the case but would look into it and get back to the Committee on this inquiry.**
- Once the site is up for re-development, which is 6 months to 2 years out, the HDSB must apply to the City if the HDSB intends to sever the property. The parcel land and the HDSB will be subject to Planning Act regulations and would take a minimum of 3 months to go through the process. When an application is submitted to the City, if requested, planning staff will meet with the GBPC.
- Jack: This committee is looking at a portion of greenspace that will be for sale in an undefined period of time probably 6 months to 2 years, after looking at roads, floodplains etc For this committee we have a window of opportunity of 6 months to 2 years... and then if we have to go back to other boards it'll take longer.

2. Next Steps

- The City of Burlington is currently developing its 2002-2010 Strategic Plan. The uniqueness of the General Brock site was well represented at the Budget meetings by the various delegations and is being taken into consideration. Council made a strategic decision to commit funds to a Strategic Parkland Acquisition Fund as a direct result of the GBPC's presentation. This is a significant success.
- Wayne: We don't know how long this will take and how much we plan to offer. We had to give up the Percy Mary site to the French Catholic board so we put some of our staff into the 3rd floor of Brock plus there are the Gary Allen students on the first floor. The Board gets grant funding for the kids there who are under 21. The program is funded, but not the school site. The 3rd issue for the Board is what they're doing with Program and Spec Ed staff... they're jammed into a small building, so they're exploring the campus idea for them, as their accommodations are too crowded right now. We see Gerry doing due diligence over whether we'll use the 2nd floor too, so we'll probably need more parking because of all this. So we'll make a decision about how much we'll need and then look at the severance we'll be doing. Gerry is looking at how many bodies they'll get in there. There's a caf and library that would make excellent teacher training centres for example.
- Peggy: with the separate board pulling out of the campus plan, our ability to achieve funding through the Ministry for staffing accommodation isn't guaranteed. With the Catholic Board as part of this, it might have gotten some seed money because of its uniqueness, but now that they're not we need to fund it ourselves. We have 7 new trustees, Donna being one of them, and they're on a

steep learning curve. We're trying to bring them along and inform them. We know the community wants time lines, but we can't give them right now.

- Tim: There is a planning process underway now. The issue of General Brock Park was well represented at budget time. Council made a very strategic decision with the enabling piece of the Strategic Land Purchase fund, which has set a tone for moving forward. Because of the Strategic Land Purchase Fund there's more discussion about parkland at risk now. This is a big issue for council now, especially this new council. It's a good time to be engaged in this process again. We're not sure where it's going to end. The City is looking at where the school board is going to go and we want to be ready. We're looking at how the Strategic Land Purchase Fund will unfold, and looking at the overall picture. We're 3 to 4 months from setting out the Strategic Plan. The bottom line is...we're positioning ourselves to be ready when the board makes its decision about General Brock Park. We have an interest in the entire site. There are no specific steps, we're just trying to get ready for what comes.

Questions, Answers & Comments:

- Amy: recommended an improved process from this point on where all the parties will work together in the future to save valued parkland. Surely we have common ground (Citizens, city and HDSB) so we should be able to roll up our sleeves and get to work. Over the past 4 years, the process has not been collaborative as we believed it would be from the onset. We do plan to delegate to the Board. With the Burlington school closures to date, 86% of the parkland has been lost to development. This is not a successful partnership and we want to work together to find a new and better way to address the GB issue. We hope that our efforts will help to avoid future grass root community groups to have to be formed to fight the city and school board to protect their valued school parklands. Lets get it right this time and find a way to work together to address all future school closures in this city. We are hard working volunteers and believe that if this process is going to continue, it is very important that we have some clarity today regarding what the goals are for each of the partners on this issue. We want our time to be respected. We hope to have an open dialogue.
- Q -Amy: What is the school board's policy about the tendering process when it comes to school playfields use? Did they accept the first for-profit sports group, in this case Invictas?
- A - Wayne J - the HDSB policy does not address tenders. For the most part all sport field requests are directed to the City to permit as part of the Reciprocal Agreement. In the case of GB, it had been removed from the agreement and therefore the HDSB permitted the site at the request of Invictas. HDSB has no funding for administrative facilities and therefore the revenue from this permit goes toward the facility fund. The school board was not aware of any other interest from a for-profit group at the time the permit was issued. People apply, and if you fill out your form first plus if you have some history, then you'll get it.

- Q - Louis: Wouldn't it have made sense to offer the park to the people who'd been using it for 40 years? If GB is available in future years, will the school board have a public tendering process to ensure that community groups have the opportunity to bid on the fields?
- A - Wayne J. will take this comment under advisement to the Board. I'll have to find out the process.
- Sarah: I didn't know we had to go through this process. If I'd known, I would have done it.
- Wayne : I hear an interest in an open process. As I'm sitting here today, I'm not sure it'll happen. But I hear you.
- Q - Sarah: But what about the field maintenance that is going to be done on these fields under the reciprocal agreement?
- A - Jack's : It's bigger than that... we're (the City is) doing the maintenance for the people using the building.
- Q - Amy: We had a public open house a year ago in January 2006. Fred Galloway facilitated it at the taxpayer's expense. He completed a report that unfortunately never made it into the hands of former council. I did issue copies of the report to all current council members. Important to note that one of the key recommendations in this report includes: "The need for the City to act assertively to secure what park and open space lands become available at Brock, pursuing the broadest possible size and opportunities . Significant support was provided verbally and via comment cards for the long term preservation of significant park and open space lands in this area of Burlington". What is the City's goal then regarding GB? What do you want to see as far as the parklands?
- A – Mayor Jackson: City staff takes direction from City council. The last council didn't want the park. But now there are different council members. The new council has a different commitment. For example, its budget process helped trigger 3 new issues, one of them is meeting the needs of soccer user groups for fields. Staff follow council's directions and those directions are now shifting. Tim will do what council directs the City staff to do. Jack used to be one man on one drum in the old council. Now there are 4 people who see things differently. The City staff authored a report which says that now build-out in Burlington is 5 years down the road, and the opening of the new park in the north is being pushed back in time.
- Q – Amy: Previously, the City staff recommended 3 development options for the GB site. Has there been any revisions to these original options?
- A - Tim C. There has been no re-formulation of options included in the previous report. Staff need to see where the new Council wants to go related to GB in

Future Focus VII and then develop plans and strategies based on the new Strategic Plan direction. GB has a higher profile in this strategic plan than in the previous one. Old council was then, but this is now. This is a forefront issue today.

Report PR-14/07 - Playfield Users and Ice Users Terms of Reference - was tabled at the Community & Corporate Services Committee on April 17th and will go to Council on April 30th for approval.

The following sets out the key components of both the Playfield and Ice User Committee's Terms of Reference:

Purpose:

Users will act in an advisory capacity to the Parks & Recreation Dept. to identify common needs, issues and opportunities for collaboration.

Membership Composition of the Steering Committee:

Membership will be comprised of representatives from organizations, to a maximum of 8 members for Playfield Users and 10 members for Ice Users.

Sandra provided a copy of the report with prior draft minutes

- **Q.** When does the HDSB estimate that a regional campus will be built and the site will be up for re-development?
- **A - Peggy R.** There are no guarantees that a regional campus will go forward, but assuming that it does, they are looking at 2010 to 2012.
- **Jack:** City staff have done nothing about Brock Park so far because they haven't known it was for sale.
- **Q - Ian:** Have the Parks and Rec staff let Council know how the needs in sports are being met and with consideration to population projections?
- **A – Tim:** Council sets the direction in the Strategic Plan and instructs staff to pursue funding, then a plan will be put in place. Staff are not currently exploring any funding, as this site is off the market at the present time. Council has already given direction to staff to report back on other funding options for the newly created Strategic Land Acquisition Reserve Fund. **Ian will send Tim his question and he'll get the answer... about playing fields in the future.**
- **A – Mayor Jackson :** Two weeks ago we passed a resolution about ice and fields in Burlington. The field user groups are telling us how much they need. Let's not spend \$ on finding out from consultants how many fields we need, because the field user groups know and can tell us. We're trying to get this process to percolate from the bottom up instead of the top down. We're looking at year round surfacing for many uses... for soccer, the Teen Tour Band etc. It'll be a facility bubble rather than just a soccer bubble. About the Strategic Land Purchase Fund,

Cam and Jack keep bringing it up so that it goes into the Strategic Plan which the City is now working on. They now know Brock Park is at risk, so it's going into the Strat. plan. Doing so gives latitude for them to be doing a lot of things. Those are 3 big commitments and changes that have happened with this new council. There's a change in attitude in even City staff now. Their kids play soccer. In their heart of hearts they'd love to save Brock too.

- Wayne: We need to look into the shared campus idea to know how much we need the building at General Brock Park.
- Q - Amy: If there was a potential partner who said to the Board: I'm interested in the whole site, how locked in are you to needing the building?
- A - Wayne : There's always room for discussion. Right now the Adult Ed at Gary Allan on the first floor is growing. (The Ontario government has mandated keeping kids in school to 18, so this has caused Adult Ed to grow from under 300 to over 800 students in the Halton region as a whole.)
- Ken will email Wayne to ask him how much \$ the football club paid for the rental.
- Q - Louis: What about the new Toronto professional soccer team coming? Won't that create an even greater need for fields in the future?
- A - Tim: His daughter plays rep soccer, so he is a soccer parent, as is Ann Marie Coulson, plus the Mayor is. Also, Jack's daughter plays soccer. All these people are soccer parents. Soccer is going to go crazy in Burlington. The user groups will come to City staff and they'll find out how many fields they'll need.
- Sarah: Soccer is already exploding in her club.
- Mayor Jackson: Soccer women and men are going to Oakville and Hamilton to get fields. We now as a city have a better framework for all the user groups to sit down together so everything goes on the table at once. We now have one master plan. We need a centre of excellence for the whole thing. Let's not carve up all the groups all over the city. Let's have everything in one place.
- Q - Diane: Are we (the SGBP committee) still a city committee?
- A - Tim: Yes
- Q - Katie: What about pro active ways to buy this site? Is there a way we can work together with the City to get at these pro active ways?
- Q - Amy: 4 years ago, it was suggested that a number of funding opportunities would be explored such as Trillium etc. however, I do not believe any funding

sources have been looked into. Does the City plan to begin looking at any/all of these opportunities ? Is the council going to be pro active to look at ways of buying this site?

- A - Tim: If City council sets a direction, we'll look at all feasible opportunities to acquire parkland. I see things being set out and that this council's intent is clear. I have no problems with it. In the past, council wasn't clear about what they wanted to achieve, and that sets the tone. Otherwise you end up spinning.
- Jack: It wasn't an issue for 4 years. It's hard to get staff or council excited about exploring sources for buying a park when it's not for sale. We all knew it was coming up, but we couldn't get excited when it wasn't for sale. However, we know ½ the park is going to be for sale. So now we're going to put those steps back in gear.
- Mayor Jackson: Of course. Every nickel will be explored. There was a direction in the past. It was silence. The way it was then was that the past council planned to help Jack through the difficulty of not saving the park. But this council cares about Brock. The issue is now saving greenspace. There are 4 people who agree, and maybe 5. Jack and I worked on getting \$ for it, and the Uptown Parkette is one part of the plan. It is fragile though, and if we lose on that, who knows. The families in the area are in an uprising over the Uptown Parkette. The field users have to say to them that two mini parkettes are not the future of the city. People should go to the church on Bromley Road on April 25 about it. No one in our SGBP/STTOP committees should crab about the Uptown Parkette being sold. The park only became a park on a technicality because the developer was going bankrupt. There are going to be competing interests against General Brock Park, like McMaster's \$10M and the Performing Arts Centre. There are going to be some issues with Brock Park as well. The severance process is involved in the planning act. This'll be one of the largest severances this city has dealt with in a long time. I can arrange for you to chat with planning staff. This is a complicated site because it's not normal. There's only one way in, and the residents on Johnson Drive are already ballistic. Those are practical considerations, plus the Board can't landlock the land in. All these things have to be worked out, so if they wish to work it out with a developer, they'd have to come to City Hall first. The question is... should the city buy it and develop it? Right now council is looking at banking employment land. Maybe we should go in and buy it from the school board. Some more issues about the park: You need 66 feet for road, and more flood plain land now than we used to need under the old rules. So maybe the flood plain at Brock will be bigger. We need to get more \$ into the Strategic Land Purchase fund.
- Q - Rocco: Assumption is planning to redo the fields behind the school on city land and on St Mark's land, so they won't need Brock anymore. The Catholic Board's long range plan was that they wanted Brock for awhile. Do they still want it?

- A - Peggy: They couldn't make a business case for it at the Ministry. The province turned them down, so Assumption isn't going to switch lands with Brock.
- Mayor Jackson: The Strat plan calls for Cam to write both boards to see where they're at.
- Amy: The Green Party recently announced making a case to the Boards across the province about consolidating their properties and facilities to better serve the people.
- Katie: We want educational lands to remain in public hands. We want to work together with cities and boards. Already Gary Allen is growing and Burlington will grow in the future.
- Peggy: We need to present to the trustees about this... about getting public lands in public hands. We need the public to go to the province about this as well.
- Louis. Burlington has problems with parking and greenspace already. Wal-mart needs to be told to be a good corporate citizen.

Adjournment: 10:45

Next Meeting at the call of the Chair