

ROCKANDEL&ASSOCIATES

*Building Success Through Process Facilitation,
Community Engagement & Partnership Planning*

MEMORANDUM

To: SD 43 CE Steering Committee

From: Catherine Rockandel, IAF Certified Professional Facilitator, Rockandel & Associates
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Re: School District 43 Victoria Park Elementary Dialogue Summary of Discussions

Date: November 21, 2013

On Tuesday, November 19th 2013 SD 43 hosted a public dialogue to share information about what they had heard at the October 29, 2013 Open House and through on line emails and surveys in terms of ideas and opportunities and issues and concerns relating to the portion of school district land in Victoria Park.

The dialogue began at 6:30pm with a welcome from the chair, followed by a twenty-minute presentation from Melissa Hydes, Chair, Judy Shirra, Trustee, and Ivano Cecchini. Catherine Rockandel provided an overview of the facilitated dialogue process along with participation guidelines.

A total of forty-one (41) people signed in, with some people not signing in for a total of forty-eight (48) attendees. In addition there were approximately six (6) children that enjoyed the kid friendly activities provided. Nine (9) people submitted comment forms at the meeting. The following notes summarize questions and comments raised by the public attending the meeting.

Public Dialogue: Questions and Comments (Index: Q: Questions A: Answers C: Comment)

Q: I live across street with two children 21 months and three and half. I am an educator on leave from the Vancouver School Board, so we go to the Park every afternoon and love it. Thank you for the opportunity to speak and for holding these open dialogues. I empathize with your position as Christie Clark has said she is not giving any money for capital funding for new schools, as there are fewer students. This has nothing to do with our area as it is growing and growing. Judy you had said that there was a suggestion to sell some of the property for housing, I am wondering who said that? Also you said this is not a high growth zone, what does that mean as we know there is a lot of growth in this area?

A: Some people at the Open House on October 29th suggested in their comments that we sell the lots for housing. At the Open House the Trustees listened to all perspectives and this was one that was shared. The high growth area is up the hill that is where future demographics of future students are going.

Q: I live across from park, I would like clarity about if the property was sold to a developer in exchange for a density adjustment on another property some where else would the Victoria Park land be owned by a developer with the right to do with what they want to in 30 or so years or would it be designated Park in perpetuity? Also in the event that the City identifies property on Burke Mtn that would be appropriate for an elementary school is there a mechanism in place for the City to exchange the .08 acres at Victoria Park for land up at Burke Mtn and has that happened before?

A: Typically in that type of arrangement ownership would transfer over to the City. Yes there is a mechanism in place and it has happened before. We would still need to go through a public process.

C: Craig Hodge, City of Coquitlam, I just spoke with my fellow Councillors O'Neill and Nicholason and we are all working together – the Council, the School District and the public. I wanted to clarify that when a developer takes lands and splits the land into lots he is required to give 5% to park. A developer can either give us land or give us cash and we can go and buy parkland in City.

C: I have been involved with all the developers and all this land for many years. That land has been sitting there for 5-7 years I can't believe that the school district hasn't bought the land so people living up there could have schools. The land is worth 2.7 million dollars the City should buy it and give the land to the School District. The City had an Open House promising all these wonderful things about a month ago for the park. And here is the School District saying they are going to sell it. This is a game. The city should just step up and pay the money then this whole thing will go away and this would be resolved. It is still going to take five more years to build a school.

A: There is no game being played here. We are trying to have an open and transparent conversation about property we own in Victoria Park. We wanted to hear from the public, people in the community what they saw as the future for the park. We have been working on site acquisition for Burke Mtn. It has been a number one priority for several years. We have just received permission to acquire a site.

C: My husband just spoke and we share a similar perspective, the schools are needed up on Burke Mtn. I have spoken to the Ministry, the School District and the City – everyone is pointing fingers back and forward. The questions tonight are interesting but why are matters of land and subdivisions being directed at the School District. We have enough homes in this area. We don't need any more high density, so help us out with schools.

C: I have lived in area for three years and I find it a bit aggravating when someone says we don't need more houses here. We all moved here at some point, we are the traffic that is jamming up the streets. I personally don't think we don't need more housing, it is a beautiful area, I love living here and I know you all do too. I want to see lots more families and lots more people moving into this neighbourhood. We need more infrastructure, but obviously not at the sacrifice of parks, or green space, or crowded schools.

Q: You had said your deadline for next steps is January and to me that seems to be a short timeline. I have read some of the material on the website so understand some of the context. Why the short timeline? I would like to also suggest that the current government is allowing you to sell land but if and when the government changes the rules may change. So even with perceived short opportunity timelines, you need to think long term to make the right decisions for example in terms of the right options for Moody Elementary if you intend to sell or close it.

A: These meetings are part of a process in terms of research in January a decision of the Board may be to conduct further research or consultation based on what we hear in this process. The Government has not given full approval for School Districts to dispose of properties. It has opened the door for exploring options and disposing of property is only one option, another is long-term lease. There has been no decisions made to sell Moody Elementary, the school is not closing. We are looking at options for the Moody corridor.

C: As the provincial representative I would like to say in particular with our School trustees here and our Councillors we are working more closely than we ever have. It is about finding solutions that are best for the community - we are all elected by the same people. We have done well in this district in

terms of capital projects. Our school board has done a very good job in terms of managing community assets, we need to use them more in evenings - James Park is the model for the future. This type of reaching out to the community is really important. I think most of us have heard loud and clear that we want to see this land as a park. It is about how do we accomplish that.

Q: Does the school board have any revenue properties?

A: We have approximately 3 leases that bring in about \$600,000 on an annual basis that augments the operating funds of school

Q: Are there other consultations occurring on other properties in particular Coronation. Coronation is really run down, people squat there. Coronation would seem to be more useful to be sold.

A: Yes, the consultation schedule is detailed in the guide provided to you, on the presentation board by the front door and on the website. The Coronation dialogue is on Wednesday, November 27th. This will include a discussion on options as no decisions have been made.

Q: With all the discussions about capital and operating what mechanisms are in place to ensure that any land that is sold will go to new schools versus getting used for deficits

A: All money generated from capital sales goes into the capital budget it cannot be used for operating. If any money is generated it would stay in the School District to be used for new buildings.

C: From what I can see, the fore sight wasn't in place from when we moved here a few years ago to ensure that we stayed. It will be the next wave of families that will benefit. We are looking at other places where the infrastructure is in place – The City needs to get better in some way of planning if you know the people are coming and the houses are going to be built then you need to plan for and build infrastructure at the same time.

A: City Councillors provided a comprehensive update of planning, new infrastructure and City funding formulas

A: School District is working with the City on plans for two joint park school sites to maximize school and park use of sites so they work best for school use, after school use and community use.

C: My comments are directed to the comments made by Councillors Hodge and O'Neill about the planning meeting at Victoria Hall. When we know about the needs of community beyond our neighbourhood why does the City need to invest more money in Victoria Park when it is already busy. My neighbours may not like this but it doesn't make sense to me why you would build more stuff and spend more money when other areas have a greater need for parks for kids that live farther way and use it down the road for park demand in 2 or 5 years in new communities.

Q: I sat on Smiling Creek community plan 2006-2007 the school lands were allocated at that time. Why have none of the plans been put in place? When are we going to see houses built there? It seems so helpless

A: The School District Superintendent provided a detailed description of the process, timelines and approval processes to move new school developments forward.

Q: I understand developers have to set aside land for Parks, does the City need to buy that land from developer?

A: It is a requirement of subdividing the land developers have to provide money for DCC's to service their land, they also have to provide 5% as park lands, we have the option of taking cash for the market value of the land 5% in cash and then we can go out and buy land in an area where parks might be needed

Q: Are developers required to set land aside for schools? If not, could they be required to do so? If you build a city you need infrastructure and schools are part of infrastructure. Why are developers not held responsible for planning for land for schools? I don't understand this

A: No, they are not required to set land aside for schools. There is a mechanism to put some developer money aside for school to purchase but it is not sufficient to do what is required by the growth and demand for schools. In the past there was also a process for free crown grants for school sites this mechanism has not been available to us because of the economics of times. There has been a shift over the past two years and we are trying to work with the Ministry of Education to meet the needs and interests of the community.