

Meeting Minutes of BBCMUG (internal meeting), April 14, 2013 at 2PM

In attendance:

- JC d'Almeida
- Ken Christie
- Sean Smith
- Harry Trombley
- Peter Vandergugten

Topics Discussed:

- **Registration as a Society** – Under the BC Societies Act, any non-profit group can register as a Society.

(see: <http://www.bcregistryservices.gov.bc.ca/bcreg/corppg/societies/index.page>)

This grants a level of official status, and some level of protection from liability for directors of the Society. A sample set of by-laws for the conduct of the Society are offered for use (or modification) as part of the registration process. Cost for reserving the name is \$30, incorporation of the Society is \$100, and thereafter an annual renewal form must be submitted at a cost of \$25.

- **Group Name** – An official name is required in order to register as a society. The application form requests 3 proposed names, in order of preference, so if one name is already taken (or too similar to another one), then the next name can be granted. After some discussion, the three names chosen to put forward are:
 1. Burrard Civic Marina Community Association
 2. Burrard Civic Marina Community Society
 3. Burrard Civic Marina Boaters Association

The three names in the above order have been submitted for name search and reservation. The preferred name of Burrard Civic Marina Community Association was chosen as "Community Association" is the actual terminology used by most of the Vancouver community centre groups. The choice of this name therefore reflects that we wish to place our group on an equal footing with other community centres, in the eyes of the Parks Board.

A quick web search shows that the initials of any of these three choices do not appear to be widely used by any other group or entity remotely associated with boating.

Once a name is granted, we can proceed with the rest of the application. At this point, the choice of by-laws preferred is the standard format available for use. (available online at the website referred above)

- **Seniors Discount** – It was agreed that the group will continue to press the PB on this issue. The PB set precedent by offering a seniors discount for over 40 years, before taking it away. The PB also continues to set a precedent by offering a seniors discount

for other facilities and users. Therefore, this shows that boaters are being discriminated against unfairly.

- **Waiting List** – The Group continues to believe that the Waiting List is not as lengthy as PB wants us to believe. An example of how waiting lists and slip availability are presented in a more informative and professional manner from Shilshole Bay Marina has been presented previously to PB, with the hopes that they will adopt such a format which shows more transparency.

In addition, a quick survey previously conducted by Sean Smith on the east side of the marina found 51 empty slips, some capable of accommodating boats up to 34' long. Subsequent re-surveys found most of these slips remain empty. Reports have come to us of slips for boats 30+ feet being available at Vancouver Rowing Club, asking their members if they know anyone from outside the club who is looking for a slip. This would imply their waiting list is practically exhausted. Reports of slips being available at Spruce Marina have also come to members of the group. Meanwhile, new slips are being built at Heather Marina, and a new marina, Milltown Marina, on the Fraser River at Marpole is opening this season. (posted rates for 26' boats are \$10.50/foot/month, compare to \$11.61/foot/month at Burrard Civic. See www.milltownmarina.com)

- **Financial Documents** – PB had previously promised to make available financial documents (budgets and/or actuals) for previous years. These have not been received as yet. The Group has decided that it is important to see these figures for past years so we can fully understand how much it actually costs to operate the marina, and how much money should be available for critical repairs and upgrades. At the most recent meeting with PB staff, Gordon Barber had mentioned that the budgets do not show all costs associated with operation of the marina, namely that certain maintenance costs are tracked separately.

We feel it is important to see and understand all of these costs, as otherwise the users are led to believe that the cost of operation of the marina is much less, and therefore more money which should be available for marina repairs is instead being unfairly siphoned off for other PB general revenue. The implication that certain costs are not tracked in the marina budget also creates some mistrust for the numbers presented for public review.

- **Water Supply** – The Group will continue to push for solutions for year-round water supply. While the PB initially tried to say this was an impossibility at the last meeting, mention was made of various practical and economic solutions (drip valves, electric heater wires, etc.) which apparently have never been investigated by PB staff, but they sounded willing to investigate these options. The Group may need to provide further research and details for PB to investigate, as the degree to which PB is motivated to provide innovative solutions appears to be low.

A suggestion was also made that perhaps there should be a discount for those winter months when water is unavailable.

A report was also heard that at the time of the meeting there was no water available on the west side of the marina, due to a water line being breached during installation of a docking cleat.

- **Fee Freeze** – The proposal that fees be frozen until significant improvements are made continues to be a favourable concept to the Group, and will be brought up again at the next meeting with PB staff.
- **Electrical Service Charges** – At the last meeting with PB staff, Gordon Barber attempted to explain why Heather Marina charges significantly less for power than Burrard Civic, and that this is due to the different structure of how Heather is run directly by the City, with PB only supplying services for general operations. Nonetheless, this explanation remains obscure at best to Group members, and does not in any way explain how Burrard Civic can justify charging such higher fees. The fact that the most recent budget showed an expected profit of \$14,600 on electrical fees was also never explained.

The Group will continue to push for fair and equitable electrical fees, and is not interested in vague explanations of varying bureaucratic policies.

It was also suggested that if electrical service was included in the moorage fees, it may cost the average user about \$100 for year-round power. This would prove beneficial for the ability to use trickle-chargers to maintain battery life year-round, and keep bilge pumps operational. Whether all Users would be in favour of such a policy is unknown, but the idea remains worthy of consideration.

- **Electrical System Repairs/Upgrades** – As indicated by PB staff at the last meeting, any significant improvements to the electrical system will have to wait until the potential inclusion in the next Capital Plan of 2015. Until then, the only repairs to the system will be “maintenance only”. The Group is willing to work with PB to ensure that significant replacement of the electrical system will be included in the 2015 Capital Plan, but also continues to express impatience over having to wait another two years for improvements to this outmoded, failure-prone, and substandard system.
- **Sub-lease Charges** – The Group continues to believe that a 30% sub-lease fee is grossly unfair and in no way represents the extra administrative costs for a sub-lease. Moreover, as the nature of the waiting list remains obscure, there is no guarantee that new customers to the marina are not being unfairly presented with the sole option of a sub-lease until a permanent slip becomes available. If this is indeed occurring, this would be grossly unfair profiteering.

The PB maintains that most marinas now charge a 30% sub-lease. It is in the best interests of the Group to do our own independent research to see if this is true.

- **Derelict Boats** – This issue was briefly raised at the last meeting with PB staff. The concern is that boats which appear to be unused or derelict are unfairly hogging space which could be made available to new customers who would be active boaters. Various boats have been observed from time to time which are in such a state of neglect that their resale value must be much less than their annual moorage dues. The owners of

these vessels could be offered land storage, but it appears to be not in the interests of PB staff to make such a suggestion to owners.

Neglected boats also lend the impression that the Burrard Civic is the “trailer park” of marinas, they are unsightly to look at, and often are inhabited by animals who leave excrement and foul odours. Plus, certain neglected boats have sunk at the dock in the past, with all the unwanted effects of oil and fuel leaks, floating debris, and potential damage to the docks.

While it is acknowledged that definition of a “derelict boat” is a grey zone, PB staff indicated that they would appreciate some guidance on this issue.

One point raised on the subject was that as the marina insists upon valid insurance for vessels, most insurers will in turn insist on a marine survey at some regular interval, which determines whether a vessel is seaworthy. However, upon discussion among the members present, it appears that not all insurers insist upon a survey, so there may be loopholes to this approach. Still, it may not be unreasonable for the marina office to enact their own requirement to show proof of a regular marine survey at some defined interval. This may help convince owners of some neglected boats to either provide more maintenance, move to dry storage, or sell the vessel to new owners who will give the vessels the attention they need. More discussion on the subject is required.

- **Repair Funding** – The Group continues to hold the belief that the Marina should be treated as an independent entity, so revenue profits go back towards funding marina requirements first, before being siphoned off to PB general revenue. The PB explanation that all revenues are already “pre-allocated”, and there is no money available for major repairs and upgrades, continues to remain inexplicable to members of the group.
- **Engineering Report** – A survey of the marina was recently conducted by the firm of Worley Parsons. The Group intends to ask PB for a copy of the report when it becomes available.
- **Dredging** – As parts of the marina, particular the west section, continue to silt up and lose available depth, the Group intends to ask the PB if there’s any plan or consideration being given to dredging. The ability of the marina to offer slips, especially for longer keelboats, is negatively impacted, and makes the marina continue to be less attractive to new and existing clients. It is hoped that this topic may be addressed in the Worley Parsons study.
- **Washroom Reconstruction** – Members of the group were briefly shown a copy of plans for reconstruction of washrooms, including showers, at the most recent meeting with PB staff. The group intends to ask for a copy of these plans for detailed review and sharing amongst the users. Concerns about the current level of maintenance were also brought forward, with the hopes that maintenance will be significantly improved for the new washrooms.
- **Caretaker’s Suite** – Reports have come to us that the artist chosen to take up residence has now declined the suite. The Group wishes to continue to push for having this facility returned for use of the marina customers. A more comfortable and purpose-built

Members Lounge, with facilities for meetings, whiteboard, projector or other equipment being a primary goal.

A suggestion was made that perhaps a reasonable fee could be charged to reserve use of the facility for groups holding meetings. This may prove appealing to the revenue-minded PB, and enable a formalized booking procedure and responsibilities for clean-up.

In the interim, the Group intends to ask the PB to use it as a meeting place for our next meeting with PB staff.

- **Bike Rack Area** – At the last meeting with PB staff, it was suggested that if a secure gate and fob entry was built at the entrance to the courtyard grounds to the members' washroom, this would allow for a well-secured location to park bicycles. The solution is relatively cheap and easy to install. The group intends to ask if any progress has been made towards such an installation.
- **Tide Grid** – It has been noted that the tide grid has been recently cleaned of mud and debris. The group intends to ask if any progress has been made towards installation of some kind of ladder for easy access from the dock. The steel plates remain damaged, bent, and/or loose, and a new solution is required. A heavy-duty mesh grid was suggested as a solution which would provide solid footing with traction, and allow water to rise through without incurring structural pressure and damage.
- **Wi-fi** – Reports are that the marina office continues to test and experiment with Wi-Fi antennas and repeaters. A question has been raised about what kind of bandwidth is required to provide adequate service, once a large number of customers begin to use the system.
- **Security Cameras** – The group intends to ask PB staff as to the status of any investigation into installation of security cameras, and/or webcams which members may be able to use to remotely check on the condition of the marina or vessels where visible. The new security firm has been seen to be providing more patrols, but security remains a concern worthy of regular discussion.
- **Parking Lot** – No issues of concern here at this time. The Group understands that the PB intends to look into the viability of relocating the works section (where docks are rebuilt) to a location underneath Burrard Bridge, and this free up some more parking spaces. Generally there does not seem to be any problem with parking spaces being unavailable, with the exception of events such as the fireworks, in such cases having staff on hand at the time to verify that vehicles have valid stickers before being allowed entry would be an effective policy.
- **Ferry Access** – The Group had asked the PB staff to reinstate allowing the ferry operators to offer access to the marina at L dock, upon showing proof of being a marina member by showing the access card. The ferry operators were considered to be quite diligent in this policy in the past, and so long as this remains the case, renewal of this service is an added benefit to users of the marina. Status of communication with the ferry operators on renewal of the service is requested.

- **Fire Contingency Plans** – At the last PB meeting it appeared that there were no particular plans for fire emergencies other than deferring handling of such matters to the local fire department, and that members should evacuate any area of fire.

PB staff seemed unaware that all vessels are required to carry one or more fire extinguishers (dependant on the size of the vessel), and that typical boater training courses include fire safety and response methods. As such, the typical boater will respond to any fire by actively using any tools at hand to attempt to suppress a fire. Immediate response will help prevent fire from spreading to other vessels, and moreover, if caught on the wrong side of a fire, most docks are dead ends, evacuation is only possible by use of whatever available vessels are at hand.

Further discussion on the issue is required, with the ultimate purpose being some kind of contingency plan or procedures which can be effectively communicated to all marina users.

- **Snag Forms** – Discussion continues on what the most effective method would be, whether this should be a standardized paper form and drop-box, or e-mail to marina staff. (Note – it was suggested after the meeting that the City of Vancouver 3-1-1 number may already serve the purpose, particularly as case numbers are given to each call for follow-up)

Future meetings:

- The next meeting will be with Parks Board staff, on Wednesday April 24th, from 3 to 4:30 PM, at the Members Lounge at Burrard Civic Marina. At the time of writing of these minutes, an agenda has already been circulated via the group e-mail. All members are welcome to attend.