



c/o Hastings Community Centre · 3096 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V5K 2A3 · info@hastingspark.ca

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Spot Light on a Community Personality: Chris Tonge, Gardener Extraordinaire

Chris worked in Hastings Park for the PNE for an incredible 35 years, 28 years as the Head Gardener.

Originally from San Francisco, Chris came to Canada in August 1970 and lived with his uncle Harry Rankin for the first year in his new country. He attended university in California, then Langara College and BCIT where he studied landscape horticulture. Chris soon found green employment at the Park Board, Vancouver General Hospital and finally in Hastings Park.

Chris reminisced about the many changes he has seen in Hastings Park and fondly remembers a time when the PNE was truly a community event that included large agricultural, hobby and craft displays and activities. He was thankful for Peter Male and Lorraine, who worked for a horticultural return at the PNE; supervisors, Rob Crema and Tony Edwards; and his supportive and competent second in charge, Greg Antonson.

Chris has always had a love of nature and working outdoors. In addition, marine biology and tropical fish are a particular interest.

Retirement will not see Chris sitting in his easy chair. A basement renovation project and an aquarium maintenance - interior landscaping service are possibilities for the future. The biggest focus for Chris and wife, Roxanne, are daughter Myriah, son-in-law James, but especially, granddaughter Isla born in April 2008. Chris looks forward to the day that he will take Isla to both the Italian Gardens playground and Playland.

Chris has had an excellent relationship with the Hastings Park Conservancy and is well respected by members for his tireless effort to maintain Hastings Park, especially, the Sanctuary and Italian and Momiji Gardens. The Conservancy is well aware of the difficulties Chris faced; less than perfect landscaping design and implementation plus budgetary restraints.

For the future, Chris emphasized the need for honest, open and sincere communication among all parties in deciding the destiny of Hastings Park; City of Vancouver, Park Board, PNE, Racetrack and the Hasting Sunrise Community. He also hopes that the focus of PNE returns to its community fair roots.

Again, a heartfelt thanks and congratulations on your well-deserved retirement from the Hastings Park Conservancy. We will miss you, Chris!



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See Page 3 for information on how you can help spend a \$20,000 educational program grant that the Conservancy was recently awarded.

Governance in Hastings Park

Park Board Governance for Hastings Park! That's been the Conservancy's goal for years. Dealing with the PNE's less-than-careful management of the site has been hard.

Since 2004 its Interim Board has run the entire site except for Empire Bowl. There's an Advisory Council (voice, no vote) on which the Conservancy had a seat, but we were banned during our lawsuit against the City. After that, our rep did attend one meeting, this spring. At the next, he was refused entry.

Fast forward to May. With no advance notice, Deputy City Manager James Ridge proposed changes to the PNE "Interim" Board and an extension of its governance. Councillor Raymond Louie would be chair. Senior City staff would join (Community Services, Finance, Operating Engineer, Park Board, Human Resources), plus an elected Park Board commissioner. Some "community representatives" would also be added.

Quickly the Conservancy and other groups -- the Business Improvement Association, CUPE 1004, the Hastings Community Association -- organized to appear at City Council on 21 May. The Conservancy spoke in favour of Park Board governance and, failing that, supported more community representation -- labour, local small business, environmental.

A Short History of the Key Stakeholders Group 2008 to 2009

Like some endless TV series, the Key Stakeholder's Group drags on and on, changing managers frequently but never arriving at a resolution of the plot. Recent episodes include these:

Fall 2008 The City announced a "New Approach For The Future" of the Park (without answers from City staff to 9 questions posed in 2004, intended to precede further decisions) and appointed landscape architect Dave Hutch as Project Manager, plus two sets of consultants. Phillips Farevaag Smallemberg did the 1996 design for Hastings, while FORREC of Toronto has worked in theme parks, racetracks, and gaming.

Feb 2009 KSG meetings resumed. Dave Hutch, plus Marta Farevaag and Chris Phillips of PFS, presented an overview of Park history and of issues still to be resolved (such as heritage buildings, horse barn relocation, stream to New Brighton, parking, funding, governance). Yet more consultants appeared, from an LA firm, Economic Research Associates.

April 2009 On April 8th Marta Farevaag's presentation noted community centres, transit, greenways, bikeways, views, heritage elements, etc. FORREC's presentation proposed a 30% increase in Playland's footprint, justified by financial returns and potential market growth.

June 2009 Dave Hutch reported that the City is meeting with the Track about relocating the barns. Also, drawings of new pedestrian/programming areas show a stream running east of the Track. FORREC implied a will to trade Windermere Hill for Empire Bowl, thus moving the Fair eastward.

The Vision majority on Council put Ridge's report through, opposed by Susan Anton/NPA. In the autumn decisions will be made (how? by whom?) about the community representatives. The Conservancy is working with other groups to present a set of nominations.

A happy note: An FOI request for documents from in-camera City Council meetings revealed:
(a) the PNE Interim Board's authority has been renewed annually far past its originally proposed life-span, and
(b) the Hastings Park Conservancy's right to be on the PNE Board's Advisory Council has never been revoked.

At the most recent meeting, our rep was challenged at the door by the PNE General Manager, who told him he could not attend. Only by producing the Council record from an in-camera meeting that stipulated the Conservancy's right to be present, was our rep finally seated.

Our view of the KSG: It is heavily dominated by commercial interests (PNE, BIA, Racino), so the Conservancy is among very few community reps. Constant KSG themes are expansion of Playland, generating more revenue from the Park, and increasing both the Fair's footprint AND green space. Also, the plans have no base in specific timelines and funding. All will be deferred to the post-Olympic era. However, it's heartening that at the June KSG meeting 3 of 4 breakout groups were strongly pro-Park.

A final note -- The BC Lions want to use Empire Bowl in 2010 while the roof of BC Place gets rebuilt. Goodbye to local teams, goodbye to MoreSports and other kids' activities. . . . Did FORREC or the Los Angeles consultants have a hand in this?

The "Master Plan" display, now being shown about the city, has lots about theme park and very little about stream and green.

Email or phone your comments to the following, HPC too:

- Mayor and Councillors
mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca or 604.873.7276
- Park Board Commissioners
pbcomment@vancouver.ca or 604.257.8000
- Dave Hutch, Hastings Park Project Manager
dave.hutch@vancouver.ca or 604.871.6845
- HPC info@hastingspark.ca

The PNE & Noise

The PNE is exempt from existing City noise level restrictions. While our community is bombarded by the 17 day fair with music and PA announcements, there is little sympathy to our plight and an unwillingness to seriously address all noise problems.

When the noise starts contact all of the following and be sure and let us know too



- City of Vancouver centralized call # - 311 (Ask for a case # & pass it on to HPC.)
- Mike McDaniel, PNE CEO mmcdaniel@pne.ca
- PNE Community Relations communityrelations@pne.ca or 604.251.7708
- Raymond Louie, Interim PNE Board Chair rlrlouie@vancouver.ca or 604.873.7243
- Dave Hutch, Hastings Park Project Manager dave.hutch@vancouver.ca or 604.871.6845
- HPC info@hastingspark.ca

Blues Concert in the Garden Auditorium

The Conservancy is trying to put on a fund-raising Blues event in the Garden Auditorium. For those of you who have lived in Vancouver for a long time, you will know that the Garden Auditorium was a venue used by many well-known entertainers. We will keep you posted on our negotiations with the PNE and City...

\$20,000 Educational Grant Award

The Community Legacy Fund was created out of the agreement between the City of Vancouver and Hastings Entertainment Inc. with the installation of slots in Hastings Park, the only large green space in all of east Vancouver. The fund, managed solely by the City of Vancouver with input from community groups, is to mitigate problems arising from slots and to provide some minimal benefits to the Hastings Sunrise neighbourhood. The fund provides \$100,000 per year. While that is a lot of money to someone who has to earn it, the amount does not go far. Typically \$100,000 can buy 1 (one) pedestrian-activated crosswalk.

Although the Hastings Park Conservancy continues to support the expansion of green space and to oppose commercial enterprises in Hastings Park, we did submit a total of three grant applications:

- Education Program

Research, documentation, material, signage, projects &/or events on park history, flora and fauna, and nature walks in the Sanctuary, Italian Gardens &/or Momiji Gardens for adults and children. Four local schools, Dr. AR Lord, West Coast Christian, Franklin and Hastings, have an established program of spring and winter nature walks and projects that are in need of support

- Wash Rooms
Real ones, unlike those below, with running water and flushing toilets on the west side of the park close to the Italian Gardens, Playground and Skate Board Bowl



- Hastings Creek

Feasibility study for day lighting Hastings Creek from Hastings Community Park (south of Hastings Park) to the salt marsh in New Brighton Park and thus to Burrard Inlet

The only successful application was the Education Program with a \$20,000 grant. We are looking for volunteers with ideas and computer, website and/or teaching skills. Email: info@hastingspark.ca.

Membership Database Update

Many thanks to an enthusiastic volunteer who very kindly made numerous phone calls to update our membership database. If you have a change of name, address, phone number or email address, please let us know. Email: info@hastingspark.ca.

ParkWatch

HPC does regular inspections of Hastings Park. Please view the complete reports on our website. To the right are a few meager plantings recently done in the north end of the Sanctuary.



Free Nature Walks

Mark your calendars for our next Nature Walks. Meet at the north-east corner of the Sanctuary. See our website for more details:

- Saturday, September 26, 9 am with Al Grass
- Saturday, October 24, 9 am
- Saturday, November 28, 9 am
- December, date TBA

T-Shirts



Perfect for summer!
The Conservancy's new T-shirts are soft green with a Hooded Merganser design. Available in S, M, L, XL for \$15.00.
Call Armin at 604-254-2264

Bird List

One hundred and eleven bird species have now been sighted in the Sanctuary! Recent sightings include Barred Owl, Western Meadowlark, Hairy Woodpecker, Brewer's Blackbird, and McGillivray's Warbler. Thanks to Doug Cooper for his sharp eyes!

New Book

A valuable new book, *Parks and Nature Places around Vancouver*, includes the Hastings Park Sanctuary, with text and photos by Conservancy members Pat Miller and Les Leighton respectively. The book describes 60+ sites in the Lower Mainland, with transit directions for each. Many of the contributing naturalists have led Nature Walks in Hastings Park, and proceeds from book sales go to Nature Vancouver. Visit <http://www.harbourpublishing.com/book.php?id=722>

2009 Conservancy Board

The 2009 Board of the Hastings Park Conservancy includes Rand Chatterjee, President; Barry Sharbo, Vice President; Georgina Nicholson, Treasurer; Cynthia Flood, Secretary and Environmental Ctee Liaison; Bruce Wright, Education Ctee Liaison; and members-at-large David Bornman, Donald Greenwell-Baker, Jim Hamm, and Stacy Robertson.

To get in touch with the Board, email info@hastingspark.ca. For more information visit our website at www.hastingspark.ca

To join, complete form and mail to Hastings Park Conservancy,
c/o Hastings Community Centre, 3096 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, V5K 2A3

Hastings Park Conservancy Membership Form

Name(s)

(Please provide all names for family members)

Address

Phone # _____

Email _____

(Really saves on postage!)

How did you hear about us? _____ Are you willing to volunteer and if so what are your interests and skills? _____

Individual \$10

Family \$20

Organization \$200