

February 15, 2016

Mayor Gregor Robertson
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor Robertson,

Re: 4/20 Protest Event at Sunset Beach

As you are aware, the Vancouver Park Board has jurisdiction over permanent parks in the City of Vancouver. Last Thursday, I was briefed by our General Manager, Mr. Bromley, and was advised that City of Vancouver staff had confirmed Sunset Beach Park to the organizers of 4/20 as a location for this year's event.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to express our grave concerns that this took place without the knowledge of the elected Board of Commissioners. Consequently, I think it is important to clearly inform you of the position of the Vancouver Park Board, which has serious concerns regarding this illegal, unsanctioned, and unpermitted event. The Board does not support 4/20 taking place at Sunset Beach.

First and importantly, there is a Parks Control By-law that prohibits smoking of any kind on Vancouver's beaches or in Vancouver's parks. Additionally, it is my understanding that in 2015, there were over 60 hospital admissions as a result of that year's event.

We respectfully request that you direct City staff immediately to work with organizers to identify an alternate location to Sunset Beach, respecting the will of the Board and the Parks By-law prohibiting smoking.

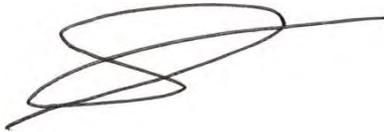
Should that not be the case, please be advised that the Park Board has a number of public safety, bylaw enforcement, health, park protection, access, location adjacency, and cost concerns. In order to ensure the health and safety of both participants and the general public, recognizing that the organizers will proceed with this event, the Park Board has a fiduciary responsibility to minimize any risks. Therefore, on behalf of Board, I respectfully advise that we wish to set out some minimum conditions:

1. We would expect a robust Vancouver Police Department (VPD) presence, including the VPD Marine Unit given the proximity to the beach and ocean. Be advised that the Vancouver Park Board intends to have a complement of lifeguards onsite to support public safety. Additionally, Park Rangers will also be onsite to advise participants to avoid entering the water.

2. Noting that the Parks By-laws specifically forbid smoking on beaches and in public parks, we expect at minimum that smoking will be restricted to a limited area and receptacles will be provided for the secure disposal of butts.
3. We would like Vancouver Coastal Health, as well as additional BC Ambulance Paramedics, to be onsite.
4. We will expect that the VPD and our Park Rangers can ensure open access to the Seawall for both pedestrians and cyclists.
5. Also, it is important that both the licensed day care and Vancouver Aquatic Centre patrons have clear and unfettered access to these facilities.
6. All costs incurred by the Park Board in ensuring public safety, refuse collection, and repair of any damage to the park or beach, will be solely borne by the City of Vancouver. Further, any legal liabilities as a result of any unfortunate accident, injury, or death shall be the sole responsibility of the City of Vancouver.

Clearly, together, both the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Park Board want to ensure a safe event. Given we are now nine weeks from the event, we believe that an alternate location needs to be identified quickly, and that steps and protocols need to be in place. I propose that we meet together with our appropriate staff leads at your earliest convenience.

Regards,



Sarah Kirby-Yung
Chair - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/clc

Copy to: PB Commissioners
PB Senior Management Team
PB Communications