

August 18, 2017

Dear Mayor and Council:

cc: Malcolm Bromley, General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation;  
Gil Kelly, General Manager, Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival Society, I am writing to voice concerns about the lack of progress to date on future plans for a community boating centre in Northeast False Creek.

The Society's Executive Director Ann Phelps accepted invitations to sit on two City of Vancouver and Park Board planning committees to represent the non-motorized community's vision for boating and recreational use of the Northeast False Creek area. It was her understanding that she was invited to participate to communicate the needs of the greater paddling and rowing communities of Vancouver, as well as to consider the needs of the overall local community. Her most recent report indicates that there is no definitive plan for a boating centre in False Creek beyond what exists now, which is limited to wharves and boat sheds for storing equipment. The community boating centre is not included in the most recent park concept plan and non-motorized boating is only mentioned briefly in the most recent planning document presented by City staff.

We also understand that the latest park plan, as presented at this stage, is not suitable for our festival or any other large community events that currently take place in the area. The Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival is entering its 30th anniversary in 2018 as the city's largest outdoor summer festival. As the first dragon boat event outside of Asia, the Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival has played a major role in developing this much-loved sport throughout North America and the world. It would be a sad development if the festival was forced to move outside the downtown core, because it was squeezed out of space in False Creek.

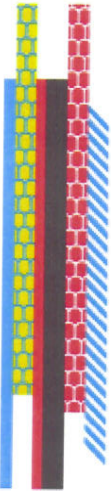
Further, it's notable that 23 of our Dragon Zone Paddling Club's junior members qualified this summer for Team Canada and recently returned from the 13<sup>th</sup> World Nations Championships in France, where they achieved gold medal standing and the World Championship title. Our local paddlers rank among the world's top competitors in the sport and have earned a permanent place on False Creek to train, store equipment, and host visiting international teams.

Overall, we are extremely disappointed in the demonstrated lack of support for the local non-motorized boating community. The City's Vancouver Sport Strategy and commitment to Sport for Life is highlighted often in City of Vancouver and Park Board websites, reports, and marketing materials; however, words are not enough. We expect our elected officials to stand behind their words, and work toward ensuring that the final plan for Northeast False Creek includes a community boating centre that will become a legacy for future paddlers and rowers.

Peter Wong  
Chair



DB DRAGON BOAT



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