

Cambrian Heights

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
Celebrating 60 Years of Community, 1956 - 2016

An Open Letter From Cambrian Heights Community Association

May 11, 2018

Calgary Parks
The City of Calgary
Calgary Municipal Building
800 Macleod Trail SE
Calgary, Alberta

Attention: Calgary Parks Director Anne Charlton

Subject: Proposed Expansion of Queen's Park Cemetery into
Cambrian Heights Community Reserve Park

Director Charlton,

Our May 10th letter addressed the historical, social and economic issues surrounding the application of City of Calgary Parks ("CCP") to re-designate through application LOC2018-0062 Reserve Park space in Cambrian Heights to S-CRI, thus allowing expansion of Queen's Park Cemetery ("QPC") onto those lands and the loss of the park space. With this letter I would like to address the procedures that were employed by CCP to obfuscate the issues in an attempt to defuse opposition and deny the need for justification.

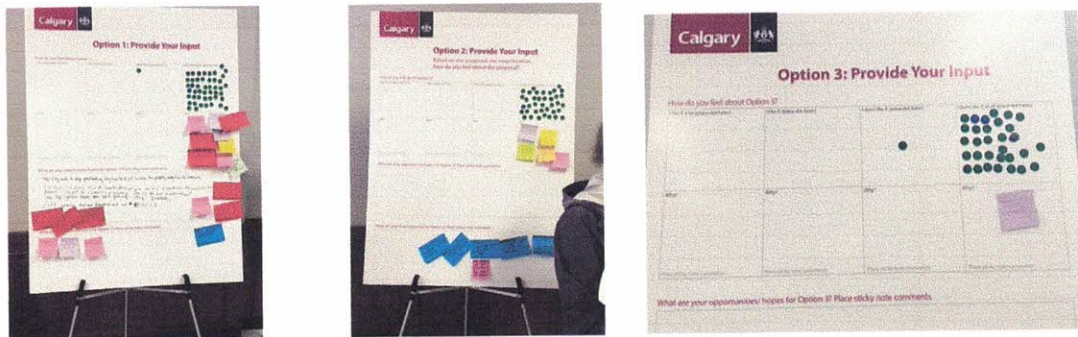
It is well documented that, both in 2005 and 2018, CCP approached Cambrian Heights and some of the offsetting communities with the position that QPC already "owned" the park lands in question and had no need to consult with the community residents. A direct quote by one of the senior employees at our March 12 Board meeting stated "we are here to inform not consult" in regards to the QPC expansion. Only when realizing the status of these Reserve Park lands was the application to re-designate made on March 19th.

At this point the CCP strategy became one of minimal consultation with letters only to those houses on 32nd Avenue bordering the Park and a scheduled "informational" meeting May 9 well after the April 13 deadline for public comments to Calgary Planning and Development ("CPD"). Public notices

stressed it was a change in an Off Leash Area issue required to allow QPC to expand. This was a demeaning and arrogant effort to focus on only dog owners who frequented the park and thus disengage our Community residents from the real issue, the annexation of a Reserve Park in place since 1956. This focus was truly reflected in the initial Calgary media coverage of the issue.

Only with Community efforts was the real issue gradually identified and with pressure on CPD and CCP by community emails and our Councillor Sean Chu was the consultation expanded to two public engagements, letters to resident coverage expanded, new additional signage placed and the submission deadline extended to May 25. However, in a continuing attempt to only focus on the issue of the Off Leash Area loss, the subject of those engagements addressed only alternate locations for the Off Leash Areas within other Community Reserve Park space and the CPD review process timelines. This was despite representatives of CCP hearing directly from the Board of Cambrian Heights that “this was not a an off leash area issue but a loss of Reserve Park space issue” on April 9th.

We have attached photo’s of the opinion boards employed to solicit public feedback at the April 26 Engagement Session. Clearly the approximately 96 people that attended this meeting were united in their expression of displeasure.



It is interesting that a true group interactive engagement only took place outside the Highwood Hall in the parking lot, initiated by the action of Cambrian Heights volunteers, where community members engaged with Ward 4 Counsellor Sean Chu and senior representatives from CCP and CPD, who agreed to leave the Hall and participate. Their participation was appreciated.

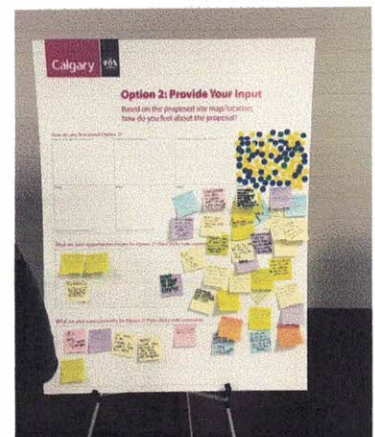


Most of the questions were directed at the subject of justification for QPC expansion, the operating practices of the cemetery, the existing spatial inventory and the timing for the new southeast Calgary City Cemetery's completion.

A second engagement session took place recently on May 9. The results displayed of the same opinion boards, for the approximately 161 people attending, were almost identical to those of April 26.



It was disappointing that the direction of conversation from the first meeting did not cause an alteration in focus during the second session. No attempt was made by CCP to justify the need for QPC expansion. We also find this a fault in the process of CPD to not require such evidence of need in what is a re-zoning application for commercial development of a City Reserve Park space. While representatives answered questions when directed



towards them, the general resident public is left to learn of these answers from community volunteers and our website rather than CCP's who administer QPC and have all the information and could easily display it openly. We can only assume their hesitancy is directed towards desire for convenient monetarily attractive expansion rather than justifiable necessity.


The community, through the Community Association, has a history of active involvement in efforts to maximize the value of its green spaces, including the lands the City is now seeking to incorporate into QPC. In fact, it was a conscious decision on the part of the Community Association to seek the off leash designation for this land as it was seen as a way to add value to the community. It is difficult to believe that CCP has used the Community's past efforts to add value to Cambrian Heights as cover for what is really happening. The issue isn't, and never has been, about this being an off-leash area. It is, and continues to be, an issue about a green space that is highly valued by the community for its social benefits.

In closing we have found the City staff with which we have dealt generally forthright when questioned and compliment their personalities and professionalism under difficult and sometimes passionate interactions with our's and neighbouring community's residents. What we question is the strategies employed and reluctance to address what is simply an annexation of our Reserve Park lands for simple convenience and, I can only assume monetary gain, in the absence of any desire to defend proof of need.

Our Community did not make the decisions in 2007 and beyond as to the mandate directed towards QPC by City Council to develop a replacement cemetery and not annex the Cambrian Heights Park lands. We have no voice in the operational activities of QPC yet are made to appear obstructionist to its expansion without being presented a clear business rationale for public review.

As always, we remain open to meet and discuss these issues at your convenience.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daryl Connolly', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daryl Connolly,
President
Cambrian Heights Community Association

Cc. Kurt Hanson, Jeff Fielding, Devery Corbin, Sean Chu