

Meeting Minutes

UBC DEVELOPMENT PERMIT BOARD (DP BOARD)

Date: July 30, 2025
Time: 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
Place: Wesbrook Community Centre, Social Room

Attendees:

Board Members

Shannon Dunn	Chair
Jennifer Sheel	Vice-Chair - UBC Administration Representative
Tsur Somerville	UBC Academic Representative
Ian Carter	Resident Representative

Absent:

Chad Berling	UBC Student Representative
Michael White	Ex-Officio - Associate Vice-President, Campus & Community Planning

Applicant Team

Wegland Sit	University Neighbourhoods Association- Operations Manager
Richard Findlay	Richard Findlay Landscape Architect Inc.– Architect, Landscape Architect
Isabel	University Neighbourhoods Association- Sustainability Specialist

Staff

Grant Miller	Director of Planning, Development Services
Mike Newall	Manager, Development Services
Kripa Thomas	Planning Assistant, Development Services (Recorder)

Members of the Campus Community

1.0 **Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda**

The Chair brings the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

A motion is made by the Chair for the approval of the Agenda. This motion is seconded by Jennifer Sheel and passes unanimously.

2.0 **Approval of Previous Minutes**

The Chair moved to approve the Minutes dated July 10, 2024. The motion passes unanimously.

3.0 **Development Permit Applications**

3.1. DP25022T – Wesbrook Place Lot 1

Grant Miller introduces Mike Newall as the new Manager of Development Services.

Mike Newall gives the following overview of the contents of the report:

- Explains and describes where the project is located. Goes over the existing site context, area, landscaping, and surrounding developments.
- Explains that project proposal was reviewed for temporary use within the context of the Wesbrook Place Neighborhood Plan.
- Provides an overview of the site's long-term use as a future Vancouver School Board elementary school under the Wesbrook Place Neighborhood Plan, noting that the school construction has not yet received provincial funding.
- Notes that interim uses may be considered on undeveloped parcels, particularly when they align with the plan's goals of promoting social interaction and active recreation.
- Concludes by saying that staff recommends that the Board endorse the recommendations on the report.

This introduction is followed by a presentation of the proposed development by applicant, Wegland Sit of University Neighbourhoods Association and Richard Findlay from Richard Findlay Landscape Architect Inc., the project landscape architect.

Questions and Comments from the Board:

The Chair reads out the conditions and recommendations provided by Campus and Community Planning staff and invites questions or comments from Board members.

Tsur Somerville provides the following questions and comments:

- Asks the applicant to elaborate on the operational costs related to parking, cleaning, and maintenance of the proposed dog park, noting that while this may fall outside Campus and Community Planning's budget, they sought reassurance that these expenses would be manageable.
 - *Wegland Sit – Operational expenses will mainly involve routine dog waste management through existing collection bins. These services are part of the regular maintenance schedule, and no significant increase to the annual maintenance budget is anticipated as a result of this temporary use.*
- Asks to elaborate on the surface material within the dog park, noting there is a sand area but inquiring about the other surfaces.
 - *Wegland Sit – The surface material will remain as it is currently, primarily hydroseed, dirt, and sand digging areas. It was acknowledged that over time, especially during winter, some muddy patches are expected as the ground wears down.*
 - *Richard Findlay – Due to budget constraints, more costly surface treatments like mulch or drain mats (used in other parks) were avoided because of maintenance challenges.*
The dog park is designed with granular surfaces and accessible service routes, including two service gates for vehicle access. Maintenance crews will treat the dog park as they would any other park component, managing it within existing resources.

- Asks about the temporary aspect of the permit and anticipated difficulty in the school permitting process in the future.
 - *Grant Miller – Acknowledges community anticipation for the future school and assured that the dog park would not obstruct the school’s development. A five-year renewable permit is expected to be issued. While the school development process might take up to ten years, the University Neighborhoods Association (UNA) understands the risk involved in their investment. The permit will clearly state that the site will revert to a school once funding and development proceed, and the dog park must be removed at that time. Although there is some discussion about potential compatibility along the edges of the school site, the school remains the priority land use as outlined in the neighborhood plan.*
 - *Wegland Sit – The dog park’s design intentionally orients it away from the future school site, closer to the Webber Lane area. The five-year term mirrors agreements used for other community gardens, such as at Hawthorn, where such permits have been successfully renewed.*
- Asks about the location of fencing and the availability of vertical objects inside the park for dogs to mark, specifically whether there are trees inside the fenced area or only outside, as dogs prefer vertical surfaces for marking.
 - *Richard Findlay – There are limited trees within the fenced area—two in the smaller section and five in the larger one. These trees are protected by cages to prevent damage. Dogs will use these vertical elements, as well as agility structures and logs inside the park, for marking purposes. While vertical clutter inside the park is minimal, these features are intentional and beneficial for the dogs’ needs.*
- Jenniffer Sheel provides the following questions and comments:
 - Appreciates the thorough community engagement.
 - Referenced a comment in the meeting package noting that temporary uses of undeveloped sites may be considered, provided they do not conflict with policies outlined in the Westbrook Neighborhood Plan. Asks for clarification whether the proposed dog park use conflicts with or supports those policies.
 - *Mike Newall – Confirms that the plan includes high-level objectives focused on building community and encouraging social interaction, as well as supporting program space for outdoor and active recreation. Based on a review of these goals, staff determined that the proposed dog park aligns with the intent of the plan. It was noted that an example of a use that would conflict with the plan would be something like temporary vehicle storage or similar uses that are clearly inconsistent with the plan’s objectives. This framework guided the interpretation and support for the proposal during report preparation.*
 - Asks about community concerns related to ensuring accountability among dog owners. While the primary response in earlier discussions had emphasized

education, requested additional clarification particularly around how rules will be communicated, enforced, and managed once the park is operational

- *Wegland Sit – Acknowledges that this aspect was only briefly mentioned during the presentation and clarified that the enforcement and management of park rules, including off-leash regulations, are part of ongoing work. In line with the April 2023 UNA Board direction, staff are preparing a report on potential implementation of a dog-leash rule. This report will be brought forward to the UNA Board for further consideration, and any additional rule-making or enforcement measures will follow after permit approval, in the near future.*
- Asks about the process if concerns are raised once the dog park is in use specifically, how issues would be escalated and addressed.
 - *Wegland Sit – There will be no formal licensing or permit system in place for dog park users. Instead, any concerns or violations will be addressed on a report basis. Community members will be able to contact designated staff, either Gale or Wegland who will follow up on the concern, take any necessary enforcement action, and document the issue accordingly.*
- Appreciates the controlled design of the dog park, particularly the non-through-flow layout and inclusion of fencing, noting it contributes to better control of dogs.
- Raises a question regarding accessibility, asking how the design accommodates users with mobility needs or other accessibility concerns.
 - *Wegland Sit – Confirms that accessibility was a key consideration in the design. All primary pathways within the park are constructed using fine-graded rock dust, which compacts well and meets ADA accessibility standards, similar to many trails used across the City of Vancouver and on campus. The site features gentle grades throughout, and the controlled gate entrances are sized to be fully accessible. In the small dog area, users can access the covered shelter and move through much of the space. In the larger dog park, a full perimeter pathway has been included to enhance accessibility, including access to the sand digging area. Seating is also provided in multiple areas, including benches and natural log features.*
- Suggests exploring opportunities for collaboration with Metro Vancouver on dog waste collection and potential recycling initiatives.
 - *Wegland Sit – University Neighborhoods Association has contracted the same waste collection service provider used by Metro Vancouver and Pacific Spirit Park for dog waste management. This is already incorporated.*
- Ian carter provided the following questions and comments:
 - Commends the thorough presentation and hard work
 - Expresses concern about the availability of parking in the area, noting current pressures in Wesbrook and anticipating increased demand in the coming years. Asks about the assumption that most visitors would walk to the dog park,

suggesting this may not be realistic and asking whether potential parking challenges had been considered.

- *Wegland Sit – acknowledges the concern and notes that, from an operations perspective, parking management within the University Neighborhoods is monitored. Confirms that on-street parking demand would likely be the primary impact, and the worst-case scenario would be a comparable situation to the beach volleyball courts, which attract a higher volume of visitors and vehicles during the summer months. While occasional parking issues have arisen in that context, they have generally been manageable. States that, while some increase in on-street parking usage may occur with the dog park, it is not expected to result in significant or sustained parking problems.*
- Asks whether first aid considerations had been incorporated into the planning for the dog park, particularly in the event of injuries or incidents on site.
 - *Wegland Sit – This requires further review in the context of dog park operations. However, the Westbrook Community Centre located adjacent to the proposed dog park has front desk staff trained in basic first aid. Additionally, staff in the fitness centre hold more advanced first aid certifications. While no dedicated first aid support is currently planned for the dog park itself, trained personnel are on site and available nearby.*
- Notes that they have not observed any dog hydrants or vertical markers in the park area. Inquire about the presence of such features, specifically referencing hydrants or vertical markers for dogs.
 - *Wegland Sit – Clarifies that the dog park design includes two stainless steel water features intended to serve as vertical markers for dogs within the park.*

Public Comments:

- A staff member on campus and resident of Mundell House in faculty and staff housing, who is also a UNA member, expresses strong support for the proposed dog park. They share that their small dog cannot be trusted off-leash in the forest due to chasing squirrels, and they currently use the space daily, walking around the volleyball courts and field while responsibly picking up after their dog. Expresses appreciation for the community engagement efforts related to the project, noting that the process has been very positive. They also comment favorably on the design, particularly the inclusion of shrubs and trees just north of the gates. As a frequent visitor to the nearby splash pad with their four-year-old, they note that this landscaping helps create a welcome sense of separation between the play area and the dog park to the south. They appreciate the plan to install dedicated dog waste bins. However, they express concern that the proposed dog park feels somewhat confined and lacks sufficient space for puppies to run freely. They acknowledge cost constraints related to fencing but ask if additional features or expanded size might be possible.

Finally, they raise a longer-term concern regarding the eventual development of the site into a school, questioning where community members will take their dogs once the dog park is removed for the school's construction.

- *Wegland Sit – Regarding the size of the dog park, he explains that any expansion is currently limited by budget constraints, with fencing being one of the most significant cost items. The project is funded through the Metro Vancouver Community Works Fund, and efforts have been made to maximize the park size within available resources. With respect to the longer-term future of the site, he acknowledges that the space is identified in the Westbrook Place plan for a future elementary school. While there is no definitive plan in place for retaining a dog park once the school is developed, it will ultimately depend on the Vancouver School Board and their design team. Assures he would advocate to preserve as many park elements as possible and collaborate with Campus and Community Planning and the VSB to explore opportunities for retention. However, the final outcome lies beyond the UNA's control.*
- *Grant Miller – The partnership with the UNA continues to grow, particularly in relation to the management of the public realm. Within the broader context of Campus Vision 2050 and anticipated future development beyond Westbrook including the Stadium Road and Acadia neighborhoods this project serves as an opportunity to gather insights. The dog park, at this scale, provides valuable lessons that help inform future public realm design. There is an ongoing need to better understand how to incorporate dogs and dog-friendly spaces into new communities, especially within limited footprints.*

- The Chair thanks the member of public for coming to the meeting and acknowledges that their comments are captured in the Minutes.

The Chair closes the public comments.

Comments and Questions from the Board (continued):

Hearing no further comments from Board members, the Chair moves to approve the recommendations to the Director of Planning, Development Services for the application:

That the Development Permit Board recommend that the Director of Planning, Campus and Community Planning issue a Development Permit for a temporary off-leash dog park on Lot 1 in Westbrook Place. The permit is subject to the following condition:

This permit is issued on a temporary basis for a period of five years or until the site is required for the development of the school is outlined in the Westbrook Place Neighborhood plan, whichever occurs first.

The Chair calls for support. The motion is carried unanimously (all in favour; none opposed).

5. **Adjournment**

The meeting is adjourned by the Chair at 6:18 pm.

DRAFT