

# Park board moves to hold more public consultation on controversial community centre plans

BY TIFFANY CRAWFORD, VANCOUVER SUN FEBRUARY 26, 2013



Concerned citizens listen to discussion about the Vancouver park board plan to assume more direct control of community centre revenues during a meeting at Hillcrest Community Centre in Vancouver, B.C., on February 7, 2013.

**Photograph by:** Steve Bosch, PNG

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**VANCOUVER** - The public could get another say on the park board's demand for more control over community centre dollars in the city of Vancouver.

The board voted unanimously Monday night to back a motion from NPA Commissioner Melissa De Genova calling for eight public consultation meetings with parks staff, the volunteer boards of community centres and the public. Staff has been given until March 11 to give the board options on how to proceed with the meetings.

De Genova says Vision Vancouver members on the park board are finally responding to the public outrage over park board plans to centralize community centre revenues under a new style of operating agreement.

"I am pleased that Vision is waking up and realizing that public consultation is so important," said De Genova. "We may finally have some real meaningful consultation."

Vancouverites aware of the park board's controversial plan to centralize community centre revenues in a new operating agreement oppose it two to one, according to a Mustel Group poll released last week. It was commissioned by six community centre associations that

are continuing to fight the park board's plan.

The survey of 317 adults from across the city found that two-thirds of respondents were aware of the controversy. Of those, 48 per cent opposed the proposed plan, 22 per cent supported it and 30 per cent had no opinion or were undecided.

The Feb. 5 to 10 poll was designed with a margin of error of 5.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

The new plan would see the park board pool the \$1.3 million in annual surpluses collected by the city's 20 volunteer-run community centres.

Twelve centres have started negotiations with the park board on a deal that would come into effect July 1. Two centres, Roundhouse and Strathcona, have not indicated their position, and six remain opposed.

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With files from Mike Hager

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