

Kerrisdale Community Centre Background

Overview

The Kerrisdale Community Centre Society began as the Point Grey Community Centre Society in December 1942. The Kerrisdale Arena (now Cyclone Taylor Arena) was built in 1949 as the result of a public fundraising drive, and was operated by the Society for many years. The then outdoor pool opened in 1954. One year later, the construction of the first section of the Kerrisdale Community Centre started after an area specific bylaw was approved by voters. The centre was officially opened in April 1955. The gymnasium and the library-health unit wing were built later. For many years, ending in the mid-1980s, Kerrisdale area residents paid a special levy on their taxes to pay for the cost of the building.

Beginning in 1980, a dedicated group of Kerrisdale citizens began campaigning for funding to build a Seniors' Centre, and six years later in December 1986, it opened with much of the funding coming from the federal government.

Major renovations were completed in 1999 (2nd Floor and South Wing) and 2002 (the Lobby and Staff Offices) and 2005 we completed the 3rd phase of renovations (Basement Area – Pottery Area and Workout Room). These projects have been funded through extensive fundraising by the community, infrastructure grants, the Park Board's Capital Plan and in the case of Phase 3, from Community Amenity Contributions from the Arbutus Gardens development.

Neighborhood History

The first settlers in Kerrisdale were the Irish McCleery brothers, who came to the area in 1867 to farm the meadows where the golf course now bearing their name is located. When the Steveston fish canneries began to flourish, a need for workers prompted the CPR to construct a railway from Vancouver to Lulu Island. The "Sockeye Special," as it was called, went through the heart of Kerrisdale, providing transportation for the first influx of people.

Kerrisdale acquired its name in 1905, when the B.C. Electric Railway took over the line from the CPR. Mrs. MacKinnon, one of the area's earliest residents, was asked by the line's general manager to name the tram stop at Wilson Road (now 41st). She chose "Kerrisdale" after her old family home in Kerrydale, Scotland.

In 1908, the area joined the new municipality of Point Grey and the first election was held January 11, 1908. As the geographic centre of the area, Kerrisdale became the political hub. The present Kerrisdale Centennial Park was the site of the original City Hall which at that time contained the Council chamber, municipal offices, the police court and a two cell jail.

Community Centre Profile

With almost 15,000 active members with a wide range of programs and services, the Kerrisdale Community Centre is one of the most used community centres in Vancouver. From January to December 2008 we offered a total of almost 4200 classes made up as follows: Winter (1086), Spring (982), Summer (900), Fall (1206). **The number of recorded visits for the year was 522,472 making Kerrisdale the busiest community centre in the system in 2008.** This number does not include the children and parents and/or care givers who use the lobby play area on a casual basis or as a meeting point. This fall we expanded our popular KidsPace programs for children. We offer KidsPace classes

for kids aged 18 months to 4 yrs and our new Baby Time and Toddler Time classes are a big hit. We have a large Martial Arts area and offer programs for all ages including Karate, Kung Fu, Taekwondo, Wushu, Iaido, Capoeira, and Aikido to name a few.

Beginning in June 2008 for our Summer Registration and then again in August for our Fall Registration we made the on-line system available for 50% of our classes one day ahead of in-person registration.

Kerrisdale Community Centre runs programs out of the Kerrisdale Arena which had more than 155,000 visits during 2008 nearly 50% higher than the city average. The Kerrisdale Pool had a little more than 104,000 visits last year well below the city average (187,795) due to the age of the pool and the general conditions of the facilities. Kerrisdale also manages the operations at Maple Grove pool during the summer.

Our exercise room, built and equipped by the Society as part of the 1999 renovations and modified again in the 2005 renovation, is extremely popular as it is extremely affordable at \$2.50 per session. We also have a wide variety of health and wellness programs. The addition of new fitness equipment appears to be keeping the pace with client needs. This year we moved the stretching component out into a separate room in the basement area in order to allow for more gym equipment in the exercise room and the Society paid to have the floors in both areas replaced this past October.

The Kerrisdale Community Centre, through its Seniors' Centre, serves lunches to 1900 people a month, Monday through Saturday, and offers a coffee and tea service to its senior members daily. It also runs 3 to 4 out trips a month often using our very own 16 passenger mini bus.

We continue to be really busy with youth without a dedicated youth worker. Our volunteer program continues to be popular. Many local youth are accumulating high school credits and volunteer hours through the centre. We have a New Youth Program coming to Kerrisdale! This program is a social recreation program for youth; they can come to play, meet new friends, find old friends, and to have a good time. Each month will feature a schedule most days will be in house, with hired contract instructors and some monthly out trips. The leader will implement a 'fun' outlook, and as the group gains popularity and the youth get to know each other, a leadership component will start to appear. Our Summer Safari is always popular and this summer we introduced some preschool camps which ran out of the arena and were very successful. We run a very popular Night Hoops program, a program for at-risk youth. For this first time, we had a girl's team participate. Last fall we sponsored an Irish exchange student on a work placement. The program was designed to give work experience to young Irish adults in a multicultural community.

Adult Wellness programs and our fitness classes are busier than ever. We have an ever increasing trend for Yoga/Pilates programs and our exercise room programs are always popular. New for Fall (and really hot) is Latin Dance. We added another class as the wait list was so long so we now have two full Latin Dance classes! Other new and popular adult programs are Photography for the Serious Beginner, Spanish, Watercolour Painting, Life Drawing, and Bridge.

Recognizing the significant demographic change in our community over the past decade, the Centre offers programs to improve English language facility for many recent immigrants who live in our community.

In June 2003 the Kerrisdale Play Palace, a joint venture of the KCC Society and the Vancouver Park

Board, opened in the Arena during non-ice time. A scaled down version continues in the community centre on weekends during the fall and winter. The Play Palace provides a recreation opportunity not available anywhere else in Vancouver and is enjoyed by thousands of happy children.

Kerrisdale Community Centre is jointly operated by the Kerrisdale Community Centre Society and the Vancouver Park Board.

Demographics

According to the last official census of the area in 2006, Kerrisdale is comprised of 14,615 people, an increase in population of just over 4% with almost 53% of those people over the age of 40 compared with the City of Vancouver average of 47.6%. English is the mother tongue to 55% (City of Vancouver - 49.1%) of the population with Chinese representing the second highest percentage at 31.3% (City of Vancouver 25.3%). Of the 5,555 private households 54% are single detached houses with 39% comprising apartments while the city averages are 19% single detached houses and 59% apartments. The population in low income households has been rising over the past 10 years and now stands at 23.9% compared to the city of Vancouver of 26.6%.

Current Issues and Challenges

Our aging pool (built in 1954 with a 50 year tank) and rink (built in 1949) need to be replaced and while we were unsuccessful in obtaining any capital funds in order to undertake the planning process we have begun that ourselves. Both facilities are well used by the community. Both have passed their expected period of use. Given its predicted 50-year life span, it's reasonable to expect that sometime fairly soon the pool will stop being usable. The pool is heavily used and will need to be replaced. We are also in desperate need of better handicap, change room and locker facilities.

Likewise our arena was built in 1949; it is inefficient to operate as well as cumbersome and, while it covers a lot of ground, it does not have the kind of usable space needed to meet current needs. Staff has noticed cracks appearing in the building that raise concerns about its structural integrity. As well it has inadequate change rooms and no multipurpose meeting rooms that could be used for birthday parties and the other types of activities which currently take place on the premise.

We made a proposal in May 2008 for the 2009 Capital Plan to have an allocation for feasibility studies and preliminary planning. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful however we believe that it's necessary to start the planning now so we have begun the process by initiating our Facilities Planning Committee (April 2009) to consider all the options and determine which would be the best one for the community and for the City. In addition, by proactively starting the planning process now, we can potentially mitigate the increased expense of responding only when the situation is urgent. We want to have plans in place with estimates for the 2012 Capital Plan. We anticipate a fundraising campaign for the new facility, and will need to have a well developed plan to take to potential donors.

As users and volunteers in our community we are moving forward on the needed changes. We can fully establish the required facilities, time the implementation in a cost-saving manner, and ensure that the citizens of Vancouver are able to continue their active, healthy lifestyles with minimal disruption.