

Meeting #1 VVJ: Coming back to Robson Square- Covid 19
via Zoom (broadcasted over VSDF Facebook Live)

June 3rd, 2020

Minutes submitted by: Aleksandra Panić

Present: Ralph Escamillan (Chair, Van Vogue Jam, House of Gvasalia), Aleksandra Panić (Secretary, Hustle at RS, Vancity Waackers), Charlene George (Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations), Natasha Gorrie (Diamonds in the Rough, Higher Ground), Arthur Tiojanco (FloorStorm), Anna Bernard (Warehouse Jaxx, Vancouver Street Dance Festival), Marty Bernard Jr (Vancouver Street Dance Festival), Jeffrey Apuada, Rina Pellerin (Ouro, Konichiwaack, Vancity Double Dutch), Graham Lee (Vancity Lockers), Heather Lamoureux (Vancouver Art Gallery), Jessica Wadsworth (CADA/West), P. Meagan Adrews (Dancers Transition Resource Centre), Justin Reiter (Lululemon), Miroslava Hajickova (Hustle at RS), Maria de Rama (Vancity Waackers, Hustle at RS), Nargis Dhirani, Jordan Lowry Fassina, Caroline Loke, Tony Grapé (Vancity Lockers), Nemo Waxx, Tony Giroux, Nathalie Hsuing (Hustle at RS), Deanna Peters (Mutable Subject, Gold Saucer, CADA/West), Albert Tsai, Stephanie Bokenfohr (Vancouver Art Gallery), Sarah Formosa (Hustle at RS), Kyle Aliman, Jheric Hizon (NON Crew), Jane (MadeInBC)

Regrets: Bryce Koebel (Heavy Hittaz, Higher Ground), Sheena Anderson (Konichiwaack, Vancity Waacking), Blessie Jovita (Vancity Double Dutch), Jennifer Dancey (D2 Studios), Anthony Robles, Leah McFly (2Live Crew), Momo (Diamonds in the Rough, Robson 800), Nine Henning.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2.

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT- Charlene George (in Squamish snichim and English)

Representative acknowledged she is from the Mission Reserve and Tsleil-Wautuh Reserve, she is a Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh person, she is a dancer of her traditional dances. Robson was fertile hunting and harvesting ground for Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam Nations, she wishes luck to the group in revitalizing Robson Square for the spirit of dance. She wishes the attendees to take precaution during COVID-19.

4. MOMENT OF SILENCE (8:46 mins for George Floyd and the BLM Movement, attendees invited to name victims of police brutality and to black out screens)

5. AGENDA PROPOSED

6. HISTORY OF ROBSON SQUARE (Natasha Gorrie, Arthur Tiojanco).

Late 1980s Nelson, an OG breaker, first started breaking on the smooth ice-rink. Security guards would kick him out, until he wrote a letter of permission to the city to allow him and his crew (poppers, lockers, breakers) to practice.

2004 City Vybe (D-Rock and Mike Rodrigues dancing with Fresh Groove), invited Arthur Tiojanco and Strait no Chaser Crew (Big Rob, Carlo Solanoi, Mango, Rick) at Robson Square. Body Language, Rock Harder, Breakaholics (mostly Miguel) were also other crews utilizing the space. RS was square, had no barriers, was not being used by the city at all and being cleaned by the Bboys practicing there.

7. COVID-19 SAFETY RECOMMENDATION REVIEW, ACTION PLAN, DISCUSSION

- Chair reviewed verbally the proposed safety guidelines working document (see doc attached).
- Chair is willing to provide mask and sanitizing fluid for facilitators until city is able to provide proper cleaning facilities. UBC is unable to provide bathrooms, portapotties identified. Robson Square ice-rink is managed by the province through the Pace Group.
- Chair called for late-additions to Use-of-Space Document to present to city staff with Jessica Wadsworth's help. This preliminary schedule is to bring awareness to how permits affect this use.
- Chair called for Robson Square voluntary clean-up crew to be assembled outside of meeting.
- Heather Lamoureux proposed VAG front space could possibly be offered to classes of street dancers and to work further with street dancers. VAG bathrooms are closed to the public.
- It was emphasized that nothing street dancers do for practice, classes is with permits, all for free. Only Vancouver Street Dance Festival has a permit.
- All space is held positively for dancers who are marginalized, and space-use etiquette is resolved peacefully through dance. Over-scheduling and over-regulating the space would be highly detrimental to street dancers.
- There is a request for security guards to stop kicking dancers out or asking to shut down music. Since street dancers have left RS during pandemic, increased substance abuse has been seen.
- Inquiry about why the upper part of South Robson stairs is still shut down.
- It was noted that private permitted use of space has affected street dance access to the space.

- Engagement with the city is to protect marginalized group use of space at Robson Square. City council is putting forward a plan to culturally revitalize Vancouver after COVID recovery.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- A meeting between partner dancers who use the space will be organized for safety.
- A meeting for safety between breakers will be organized for safety.

8. ADJOURNMENT at 8:27pm.