

Georgia Straight

Fishy debate at park board

By *matthew burrows*

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At the September 25 park board meeting, **Spencer Herbert** will seek a partnership with the Vancouver Aquarium—an institution he has criticized repeatedly.

The first-term COPE park commissioner is bringing forward a motion to partner with the aquarium on its Ocean Wise conservation program. Herbert said he wants more park-board restaurants to incorporate Ocean Wise provisions into future park-board leases and become more “environmentally sustainable”.

But Herbert told the *Straight* he is not just throwing the Vancouver aquarium a bone to soothe the blows he has dealt them over their expansion plans.

“No, but it has worked out that way,” Herbert said by phone on September 18. “I don’t think I’m that smart. In reality, I am bringing this forward now because [Mayor] **Sam Sullivan** has declared September Wild Salmon Month and I figured this was a good month [to raise the issue].”

Herbert says park-board tenants like the Fish House are already members of Ocean Wise, but for others it is “a chance to ask for goods that are environmentally sustainable”.

NPA Comm. **Ian Robertson**—the board’s liaison to the aquarium—told the *Straight* he is not in favour of making Ocean Wise a “mandated program”.

“If that’s his [Herbert’s] intent, I don’t agree.”

NPA Comm. **Marty Zlotnik** echoed his colleague, adding: “When the motion comes forward, I’ll be voting against it”.

“I think it’s an interesting motion, but from my point of view, we shouldn’t be going around telling our licencees how to run their businesses,” Zlotnik said by phone on September 19. “That’s not our job. The marketplace determines those things. If they want to have farmed salmon on their menu and the public doesn’t want farmed salmon, of course their sales will reflect that.”

As with all votes involving the Vancouver aquarium, NPA park board chair **Heather Holden**—a senior aquarium employee—will remove herself from the vote. This will likely leave suspended NPA Comm. **Allan De Genova** as the swing vote.

“Spencer talked to me about what he wanted to do with regard to the motion, and at this stage I feel pretty good about it,” De Genova told the *Straight* September 19. “In this case, I really believe he is looking at the issue and not at what’s expected of him as a member of this or that party.”