

Date: April 27, 1998

SUBJECT: BUSKING IN PARKS

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board participate on a trial basis for one year in the busking program developed by the City and designate a number of sites for buskers who purchase permits on English Bay and Kits Beach Park and several free areas in parks where buskers without permits may perform.

POLICY:

The Park Board has no policy which deals specifically with busking. Park By-Laws prohibit activities associated with busking except with the permission of the Board or the General Manager. (Appendix 1)

BACKGROUND:

The City recently developed a busking program which regulates busking on City property. (Appendix 2) There has been a mixed response to this program from buskers. In general, it is supported by the business community.

The program is two-tiered. Permits will be sold to buskers who then may busk on City property. Activities will be regulated through a set of guidelines. (Appendix 3) and enforcement is provided on a complaint basis. Fees are \$25 for a four month period or \$75 annually.

Buskers who choose not to purchase permits will be referred to 'free busking' sites.

The City has identified a number of free sites on City property and the Park Board has been asked to consider designating some free sites on parks.

DISCUSSION:

Busking happens in some parks, primarily in English Bay and Kitsilano Beach Park, even though it is not permitted. Some park users enjoy the entertainment as an enhancement of the park experience. Others don't. At Kitsilano, lifeguards have dealt with complaints about performances in this the area. There is no regulation of the types of activity and some create problematic

situations. (eg. juggling with fire or hatchets, playing loud or repetitive music or obstructing the seawall)

The only option for buskers in parks has been the Performer's Corner in Stanley Park but since the zoo closure this area has not been as well frequented and few performers have taken out permits.

Free areas such as the Art Gallery steps, Library Square, the QE Theatre Plaza, the seawall by Science World and the entrance to Skytrain stations, will be designated for those who don't purchase permits. Park Board staff have an interest in the possibility of buskers animating the plaza by the miniature train in Stanley Park and would like to see this area designated as a free busking site. Other sites proposed are the south east corner of David Lam Park, the Chilco Bus Loop Plaza, and the Fraser Landing parks from the foot of Kerr to the foot of Gladstone. Police will refer buskers without permits to these areas.

The permits issued for busking in the City would also allow limited, permitted busking on designated, marked spots in English Bay and Kitsilano Beach Park. These spots will be defined through consultation with Planning, Operations and Recreation staff.

This program for City and Parks would have one set of Guidelines to apply to all areas. Specific clauses have been added to the City Guidelines for Busking to make them relevant to parks. These have been included in the attached guidelines. (Appendix 3)

This report expands the possibilities for busking in parks on a trial basis. Consultation with buskers on this proposal has not taken place and will need to occur during the year as buskers who use the area can be identified. The City consulted with a number of buskers in the development of their program and reference was made in that report to Park Board's participation. This report has been sent to those consulted by the City. Stanley Park Police have also been consulted.

Response to busking in parks will continue to be based on complaints.

Administration of the program including selling the permits will be done by the City. If there appear to be a large number of buskers on the permitted sites revenue sharing will be discussed.

This program will be reviewed and evaluated prior to summer 1999 to determine effectiveness and, if necessary, modified or changed.

CONCLUSION:

A program which addresses busking on both City and Park land will be easier to administer and simpler for buskers.

Prepared by:
Recreation Division