

Date: June 8, 1999

**SUBJECT: Communities in Bloom Competition**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT the Board approve spending \$5,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship account to pay for costs related to the 1999 Communities in Bloom Competition.**
- B. THAT the Board approve sending Commissioner Laura McDiarmid to the Communities in Bloom National Awards Ceremony in Halifax on September 18th, 1999.**

### **POLICY**

1. The Board's policy on the approved use of Corporate Sponsorship Funds contains the following criteria:
  - a. To fund one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will support revenue-generating activities and the money repaid into the Corporate Sponsorship account from the increased revenues within a period of three years.
  - b. To fund initiatives with one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will result in improved efficiencies.
  - c. To fund one-time expenditures over and above the existing funding level in the operating budget which are beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation system.
  - d. All expenditures require Board approval.
2. The City's travel policy require authorization by a Board resolution for a Park Board member to travel within North America.

### **BACKGROUND**

In October of 1998 the Board approved the recommendation to enter the 1999 Communities in Bloom Competition. Since that time the members of the Organizing Committee (Appendix A) have been working hard to prepare for the judging of this competition which will take place on August 5 and 6, 1999.

### **DISCUSSION**

The City of Vancouver enjoys a legacy of verdant park spaces, tree-lined boulevards, beautiful floral

displays, pristine beaches and abundant opportunities for recreational pursuits. The “Communities in Bloom” competition is an opportunity to celebrate that legacy, take stock of ongoing initiatives and reaffirm the vision the Board has for the City in the next century. Because of its longstanding stewardship of the City’s public green spaces, it is fitting that the Park Board take a leadership role in this initiative.

The criteria set out by the national judges reflect the values and accomplishments of the Park Board. The challenge of the organizing committee has been twofold: ensure community awareness of and involvement in the initiative and develop a promotional strategy that reaches the community and effectively demonstrates to the national judges the breadth and depth of the City’s accomplishments. The centerpiece of the committee’s efforts has been the “Most Beautiful Block Competition”. It was created to encourage community building and provide an opportunity for residents and businesses to organize beautification projects in their own neighbourhoods or be recognized for projects they have already initiated. This neighbourhood competition provides an opportunity for all residents to support the City in its effort to win the title of “Most Beautiful City in Canada”. But more importantly, it supports the Park Board’s commitment to and dialogue with its communities. Whether or not we win the vote of the national judges, we will have gained as a City. It has been shown that when neighbourhoods are planted with trees and flowers, homes are maintained and litter is removed, crime rates drop and communities grow stronger.

So far, a number of marketing and promotional efforts have been completed to garner community support for the “Most Beautiful Block Competition”. (Appendix B) Meetings and conversations with community representatives suggest a very positive response to this endeavour and it has even been suggested that the competition become an annual event. It is seen as an opportunity for community building. However, the committee recently has identified important opportunities that would augment its promotional efforts — both to raise public awareness of the “Most Beautiful Block Completion” and to better prepare for the national judges. So far we have received 20 nominations representing 12 neighbourhoods. The committee’s goal is to double that number and increase the number of neighbourhoods represented by the closing date of June 30th.

An overview of the program being planned for the judges can be found in Appendix C. The 1999 National Finalists for this competition in Vancouver’s population category are: Surrey, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Montreal and Laval. The winners of this competition will be announced at a National Awards Ceremony in Halifax on September 18, 1999.

A budget of \$5,000 was approved in October, 1998. This budget covers the registration fee, the hotel accommodations for the visiting judges, the cost of sending someone to the Awards Ceremony and costs associated with marketing and promoting the event. The committee also has approached and received funds and in kind support for the project from a number of sponsors. However, in order to carry out a more effective marketing campaign an additional \$5,000 is being requested. This would give the committee funds to cover the cost of producing an informational slide presentation in video format for the judges and costs associated with hosting events related to the program. The slide presentation can be used for other presentations as it will highlight parks and open spaces under the responsibility of the Park Board.

The Corporate Sponsorship Account has a balance of \$320,559. This project would fit into the third category for use of funds, that of a one-time expenditure over and above the existing funding level in the operating budget which would be beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation System.

## **SUMMARY**

The “Most Beautiful Block” Competition has received a very positive response as a means of beautifying our City and increasing neighbourhood involvement. It is helpful in building the Park Board’s relationships with its communities and is beneficial to our City. By supporting the Communities in Bloom Competition and the “Most Beautiful Block” competition, the Board can expect greater community support for the services it provides.

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