



Date: July 30, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: SEASONAL OUTFIELD FENCES ON THE NORTH AND WEST DIAMONDS AT HILLCREST PARK

RECOMMENDATION

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| <p>A. THAT the Board approve the proposal by Vancouver Community Baseball to put two temporary outfield fences on Hillcrest Park; subject to all design, financial and legal details to the satisfaction of the Board.</p> <p>B. THAT the Board approve the Memorandum of Understanding with Vancouver Community Baseball to place and remove the temporary outfield fences annually, as described in Appendix A.</p> |
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BACKGROUND

Vancouver Community Baseball has provided a baseball program for youths 13 to 18 years old for the past seven years. They presently register 28 teams consisting of five Peewee (13 yrs.), 15 Bantam (13 to 15 yrs.) and eight Midget teams (16-18 yrs.). This program has grown as they consolidated teenage baseball programs throughout Vancouver. In 2000, they won the Silver Medal for Peewees and the Gold Medal for Bantams at the Canadian Championships.

This association is the sole provider of baseball for Vancouver teenagers. The 80 and 90 foot diamonds at Hillcrest Park were developed to provide quality diamonds for this age group. The best teenage baseball players in the city will play on these facilities.

DISCUSSION

Renovations to Hillcrest field were completed in 2000. The new 80-foot Bantam diamond and 90-foot Midget diamond were designed and built to the highest standards. While there are several diamonds with fences for Little League age children (under 13 years) throughout the City, there were no such facilities for teenage baseball. The proposed fences meet the Board's standards and practices for baseball.

Temporary outfield fences will enhance the standard of play while providing maximum safety for the participants and the general public. The installation of outfield fences is standard Park Board

practice. Current installations include Elm, Jericho, Hastings, John Hendry, Killarney, Memorial West, Memorial South, Naniamo, and Oak parks. The four foot fences at Hillcrest will be erected after April 7 and removed before August 16. They will not interfere with the four winter and one summer soccer fields already located on Hillcrest Park..

The fence will be open along the foul lines and will mark out the maximum circumference of the diamond between the foul lines. The large open areas along the foul lines will ensure that the fields will remain easily accessible to the public when games are not in progress.

Consultation

The residents around Hillcrest Park received a Park Board pamphlet outlining the scope of the outfield fence project (Appendix B). There were more than 1,200 pamphlets distributed to all residents within a two-block radius of the park.

Six responses were received. These responses all expressed concern over putting up a temporary fence during baseball season. These respondents were of the opinion that the fence would have an intrusive impact on the park and would negatively affect casual users of the park. Two of the respondents also mentioned that they were concerned about additional parking congestion during league games and tournaments.

To ensure that the Hillcrest sports field remain open and accessible to the casual park visitor, the outfield fences will be open along the foul lines. This will ensure easy access to the fields. There will be increased car traffic to the park during baseball season. All sports teams will be encouraged to use the public parking along Clancy Loranger Way. The fence proposal will have a negligible effect on this concern.

Financing

The estimated cost of the fences is \$15,000. All costs will be borne by Vancouver Community Baseball. This association has also contributed over \$30,000 of their own funds toward the upgrade of the Hillcrest diamonds, including in-field dirt, improved dugouts and bleachers. These expenditures were made to ensure that the Hillcrest diamonds would be a first class venue, serving the entire city.

Memorandum of Understanding

Staff has negotiated the attached Memorandum of Understanding with Vancouver Community Baseball representatives, to the satisfaction of both parties. It is understood that Vancouver Community Baseball will be responsible for the annual operating and maintenance costs related to the erection and removal of the fence. The Memorandum includes terms and conditions under the following headings in Appendix A:

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| 1. Construction | 5. Use and Storage |
| 2. Ownership | 6. Removal |
| 3. Maintenance | 7. Liability |
| 4. Renovations | 8. Insurance/Indemnification |

SUMMARY

This report sets out approval for Vancouver Community Baseball to put up a temporary outfield fence on the 80 and 90 foot diamonds at Hillcrest Park. The Memorandum of Understanding identifies the terms and conditions governing the annual erection, removal and storage of the fence.

Prepared by:
Queen Elizabeth District
Board of Parks and Recreation
City of Vancouver
BM/jm