



Date: June 29,2001

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: PAINTERS CORNER - POLICY REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board reconfirm the original conditions of use for the Painters Corner.

THAT staff review the temporary permit site on English Bay in consultation with the existing artists.

POLICY

Arts Policy

“The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation recognizes the arts as an essential element in the vital, creative, and balanced community, and, through its own jurisdiction, seeks to actively facilitate participation in and access to the arts for all citizens.”

A key goal of the Arts Policy is:

“To make the arts an essential component of Park Board policies, planning, operations, parks and facilities.”

In February of 1993 the Board reviewed Painter’s Corner and adopted the practices and procedures that form permit regulations (see Appendix A). This document states that:

“ As the intent of the Painter’s Corner is to exhibit and demonstrate the process of producing art, painters are required to do some on-site painting or drawing.”

BACKGROUND

Artists have been painting and exhibiting their work in Stanley Park for more than thirty years. Over the years, as the number of artists increased, the Board established boundaries for the area and a permit requirement with “Conditions for Use”. Originally, there was a no charge/nominal fee for

painting in the park. To acknowledge and legitimize the sale of paintings, the Board increased the fee to match the rate established by the City for street artisans in 1990 (see Appendix A).

In 1993, an additional Painters Corner site was developed in Queen Elizabeth Park to accommodate a larger number of artists. Due to the redevelopment of the lower zoo area in 1994, artists' sites were temporarily established on English Bay near the Stanley Park entrance, opposite the Aquarium and near the concession at Lumberman's Arch. During this time the Stanley Park portrait artists began working in an area separated from the landscape artists, both groups have since indicated they much prefer this arrangement. In 1998 a permanent Painters Corner area was designed in Stanley Park with an Overflow Area around the Japanese Monument. A portrait artist area will be included in the future redevelopment of the plaza in front of the Aquarium.

Permits are available at Queen Elizabeth Park for a maximum of 2 portrait and 6 landscape artists, currently there is 1 portrait and 6 landscape artists. The general area for the artists is designated but individual artist spaces are not. This has worked well at Queen Elizabeth Park.

In Stanley Park there are "approximately 80 landscape artists permits available" (note, this is the wording on the existing artist permit information). Currently there are 47 landscape permits issued for Stanley Park. The new landscape artist area has 47 specifically designated artists spaces; the Japanese Monument and English Bay areas are generally designated with up to 4 artists allowed to work at each site. Spaces are allotted on a first come first served basis.

There are a maximum of 12 portrait permits available for Stanley Park and currently 11 permits are issued. The portrait artists have remained in the Aquarium plaza area where at one point there were markings designating the 12 portrait artists spaces. Some of these markings are currently missing due to patching of the edges of the pavement. The Coordinator of Arts and Multiculturalism, the Park Ranger, the artists, Stanley Park Maintenance Foreman and the gardeners are currently working on establishing spaces that don't conflict with other park uses. Up to 4 portrait artists could work at English Bay and 4 at the Japanese Monument under the current regulations, however, to date they have not chosen to work at these sites. Spaces are designated by a lottery system overseen by the artists.

Staff meet annually with artists to discuss the Conditions of Use for Painting in the Park. Due to limited staff resources in the past, artists have been expected to self regulate their use of the Painters Corner areas. Though this has worked well at the Queen Elizabeth site with all artists complying with the regulations and painting and drawing while on site, experience has shown that in Stanley Park the Conditions of Use are not always adhered to. This summer a Stanley Park Ranger has been assigned to regularly visit Painters Corner, working with the Coordinator of Arts and Multiculturalism and the artists to comply with the regulations.

In February of 2001, the Board asked staff to review the operation of the Painters Corner in Stanley Park. In 2000, the Board approved "Busking on Parkland Guidelines" which purposely

differentiated busking from vending in the Park. Staff were asked to review the operation of Painters Corner using the same vending criteria.

DISCUSSION

In many countries, there are centuries-old traditions of artists painting in parks, inspired by the landscapes and flora and fauna surrounding them. It is appropriate that artists are found painting in two of Vancouver's world class parks - Stanley Park and Queen Elizabeth Park. The philosophy behind establishing the Park Board's "Painters Corner" is the provision of a unique opportunity for the general public and visitors to watch artists at work. In addition, the area allows artists from a variety of cultural backgrounds to work alongside each other and provides opportunities for the public to talk to the artists about their work.

This philosophy is reflected in several of the Conditions of Use for the Painters Corner:

- a requirement that the artists do some on-site drawing and painting;
- a limitation to a maximum of 20 feet of display area with a suggested maximum of 12 easels (reinforces the atmosphere of an outdoor studio vs. the appearance of a gallery);
- no stacks or piles of paintings on site;
- only original paintings can be sold, not mechanically reproduced prints;
- the only signs allowed are a maximum 5" x7" card indicating the artist's name, address and phone number.

The Painters Corner's current operation is more akin to commercial venture than a park setting. Hence, there is a need to return to the true intentions of the permitting process in the face of growing commercialism.

Painter Corner Meeting - June 12th

On June 12th, artists from the Painters Corner met with staff to review the "Conditions of Use" for Painter's Corner. The Artists were reminded of the philosophy behind Painters Corner and how this philosophy is reflected in the Conditions for Use for Painters Corner. In addition, staff outlined the Board's concerns regarding vending in the Park and the implications for the Painters Corner; specifically the outdoor studio vs. gallery concerns and the posting of prices and payments methods. The artists were informed that Park Rangers will be monitoring the Painters Corner during the summer to ensure that artists are adhering to the Conditions of Use as well as to assist the artists with any other questions or issues. Staff also reviewed the enforcement process outlined in the regulation for artists who are not following the permit's Conditions of Use:

- a first infraction will result in a verbal warning from a Ranger and the incident will be reported to the Coordinator of Arts and Multiculturalism;
- A second infraction will result in a written warning from the Coordinator;

- A third infraction will result in a forfeiture of the Artist's permit.

The artists were given a grace period until July 3, during which time the ranger would remind them of the regulations, but not make any official reports. The artists were also reminded that the English Bay site had only been temporarily designated with the intention of providing space while the Painters Corner renovations were underway. They were also reassured that they could continue to work at this site until the end of this season.

Artist Concerns

- Although many artists are abiding by the regulation that they do some painting or drawing on-site, some artists feel it is a hardship to be expected to work everyday. This appears to be more of a concern for those artists at Stanley Park as the artists at Queen Elizabeth Park are able to meet this requirement. They indicated that it would be impossibly demanding to be painting every day.
- The limitation of display space to 20 feet is too small for some vendors. Though this condition was agreed to at the February Painters Corner meeting, artists informed staff that some of them do require additional space, or on occasions when there aren't many artists in the park, they don't see why they can't use more space. Staff noted that increasing the display area results in Painters Corner resembling a gallery or store more than an artists' working space and this was not in keeping with the philosophy behind the Painters Corner.
- Historically, the posting prices or other payment information (including credit card signs) is prohibited. Though this is not specifically stated in the permit regulations the previous Coordinator of Arts and Multiculturalism confirmed that it has always been the understanding and is implicit in the regulation that states the only sign that is allowed is a 5" by 7" card with the artist's name and contact information. Staff reiterated that the primary purpose of Painters Corner is to allow members of the public to watch artists at work and not gallery sales. If people wish to buy a painting they can ask the artist the prices. Painters Corner was not a gallery and should not function nor resemble a space whose primary purpose is sales. Staff will investigate whether some kind of descriptive sign could be created for Painters Corner that would explain the philosophy of the area and would also suggest people talk to the artists if they wish to purchase a painting.
- The future of the English Bay entrance as a painters area is to be reviewed this fall. This site was only ever intended to be a temporary relocation as it is the primary entrance to the park and serves a wide variety of transportation needs including, bicycles, walkers, joggers, roller-bladers and vehicle traffic traveling in and out of the park. Staff informed the artists who currently use this area that they will be consulted during the review process.

- The painters expressed their concern that there is not enough signage in the park informing people that Painters Corner exists and where it is. Staff will review Painters Corner directional signage within the new park signage system.

SUMMARY

The Painters Corner Permit Regulations for Queen Elizabeth and Stanley Parks create the opportunity for artists to paint in the parks and for the public to have the unique experience of watching artists at work. Allowing the artists to display and sell a limited number of completed works legitimizes a practice that was occurring in the Park. It also makes it more financially feasible for the artists to spend their time in the park and is acknowledged through a permit fee equal to the business license fee established by the City for street artisans.

Staff recommend that artists continue to be permitted for these parks in accordance to the original philosophy and intentions of the policy and that the artists be required to follow the current Conditions for Use for the Painters Corner. However, it is recognized that these regulations, though essentially very good, do need to be made more explicit in areas concerning working requirements, displaying of work and the posting of prices. In recognition that more staff monitoring has been successful, the Park Ranger presence will continue.

Staff will continue to work with the painters to address their concerns while maintaining the intent to demonstrate the process of producing art. This will enhance both the artists access to working in the parks and the general public's experience of two of Vancouver's most spectacular parks.

Prepared by:

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