



Date: March 28, 2002

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: MALKIN BOWL**

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## RECOMMENDATION

- A.) *That the Board endorse fund raising by Theatre Under the Stars to redevelop Malkin Bowl.*
- B.) *That the Board agree to enter into a license with Theatre Under the Stars to occupy and operate Malkin Bowl for ten years with a ten year option exercisable by the licensee subject to the completion of fund raising and a design satisfactory to the Board.*

## CURRENT POLICY

The Board currently has given Theatre Under the Stars a five year Agreement of Understanding to occupy Malkin Bowl from May 1 to September 1. The Agreement expires in 2004.

## BACKGROUND

Theatre Under the Stars has been performing during the summer at Malkin Bowl since 1971. Their occupation of the site was based on a yearly approval (since 1985 governed by an Agreement of Understanding). In 1994 the Board's approval was extended to 5 year agreements. The current extension was approved in 1999.

## DISCUSSION

The following issues surround the current facility.

### 1. State of Repair

The building was largely rebuilt in 1983 after a fire and has been deteriorating thereafter. The original design and construction methods have made the building an ongoing maintenance headache.

## **2. Security**

The structure is very difficult to make secure. It is constantly broken into and occupied by the homeless during the seven months of inactivity. It is an ongoing fire risk, as these occupants create small fires to keep warm.

## **3. Functionality**

Designed and built originally as a band shell, the building does not serve musical theatre well. Off stage space is inadequate, particularly the lack of wings. The facility lacks public washrooms - using portable toilets to accommodate a couple of thousand people each evening. The lack of space also requires two large trailers, which occupy the area in the off season, adding to the aesthetic intrusion in Stanley Park.

## **4. Heritage Implications**

There is no reference to this structure on the City's Heritage Registry, even as a Class 'C' building. While the building was a donation to the City in 1934 by the Malkin family, it was approximately 50% destroyed in the 1983 fire and hence its intrinsic "oldness" has been lost.

The Stanley Park reference is to "Malkin Bowl", the area within which the structure sits. This name would remain.

The 1986 commemoration plaque on the building is not for the building itself, but for the Theatre Under the Stars performances which have occurred on this site. The presentation of live theatre at this venue is the historic value of the site and can be best sustained by a purpose built facility during the theatre season.

There are three possible choices for action which have been discussed by staff and the Theatre Under the Stars executive over the past year.

### **1. Refurbish the Existing Structure**

This could be the cheapest solution depending on the extent of refurbishment practical and possible. It may be a fall back position if the fund raising campaign does not meet its objectives. However, it does not address any of the functionality issues and will perpetuate the maintenance and security issues.

### **2. Expand Based on the Existing Structure**

This solution would meet Theatre Under the Stars' production needs. However, a financially feasible structure would likely perpetuate the same off season maintenance and security issues which plague the current building, since the existing footprint would likely remain the core of the expansion.

Of equal importance is the Board's reluctance to add or substantially expand buildings within Stanley Park. A significantly larger permanent Theatre Under the Stars structure, standing vacant for seven months a year, is not a sustainable option for the park or the organization.

### **3. Redevelop as a Demountable Structure**

This is the potentially most expensive option but the one which provides both parties the benefits they desire. It can be purpose built to suit musical theatre needs; it has the fewest maintenance and security issues and provides a significant aesthetic improvement in the seven month off season.

The concept would see a permanent concrete base built into the landscape. It would contain off stage needs, under-stage dressing room, costume, orchestra space, storage and toilets for Theatre Under the Stars. The base would also contain water, sewage and power distribution, administrative/sales space and public washrooms. In the off season, only some of the structural skeleton would remain; perhaps supporting arches to commemorate the existing shape on what would be an open terrace in the park. Light weight sandwich panels and tensioned fabric would be the main ingredients of the seasonal structure to be in place during the performance season. This could be stored both on site in the concrete base and in the nearby service yard in the off season.

This is the preferred solution to Malkin Bowl revitalization. Its design and costing should be pursued as the first step in this process.

The concept design should then be brought back to the Board for approval as early in the fund raising period as is possible, along with a review of the costs of the proposed design and the fund raising implications. This redevelopment of the facility is estimated to be in the order of two million dollars. Theatre Under the Stars is prepared to fund raise to achieve this goal. Given that this represents a substantial financial commitment by this volunteer organization, a long term licence agreement is required to support the organization's fund raising initiatives.

## **CONCLUSION**

Malkin Bowl is in need of major physical and functional upgrades. Its long term occupant, Theatre Under the Stars is prepared to fund raise for an exciting new facility. Staff recommend Board support for their endeavour.

Prepared by:

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