



Date: August 23, 2002

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Nat Bailey Stadium - Lease Agreement 2003

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT the Board enter into a one year lease extension under the current terms and conditions with the National Sports Organization Inc. for the use of Nat Bailey Stadium in 2003.
- B. THAT no legal rights shall arise and no consents, permissions or licences are granted hereby and none shall arise or be granted hereafter unless and until all contemplated legal documentation has been executed and delivered by all parties.
- C. THAT once the form of the lease has been approved by the General Manager and the Director of Legal Services for the City of Vancouver, that the General Manager be authorized to execute and deliver such documentation on behalf of the Board.
- D. Subsequent to a favourable decision on Vancouver/Whistler's bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics, assess the implications and develop a master plan for the Nat Bailey Stadium Park site to reflect the new proposed curling venue and defer consideration of any proposal for use of the Stadium beyond 2003 until this work has been completed.
- E. If Nat Bailey Stadium Park is not to be the site for an Olympic venue, direct staff to report back to the Board in the Fall of 2003 on the alternatives for the lease of Nat Bailey Stadium for 2004 and beyond.

POLICY

The Board approves lease agreements with organizations operating on Park Board land.

BACKGROUND

Nat Bailey Stadium, built in 1949, has served the community well but will require upgrades including seismic improvements in the near future. In January 2000 the Board approved the assignment of the lease for Nat Bailey Stadium to National Sports Organization Inc. (Vancouver

Canadians Professional Baseball Club) which included three (3) one-year options. The third year will expire at the end of December 2002.

The Vancouver Canadians have approached staff with a preliminary proposal for a new long term lease which would include some required stadium upgrades and a new lease rate. They presently pay the Board \$75,000 in annual rent and are responsible for all field, facility and parking lot maintenance. Major structural work is the Board's responsibility under the lease.

Staff have also been approached by the Canadian Baseball League, a new organization looking for a venue to begin playing in Vancouver as well as a number of cities across Canada in 2003.

In 2002 the Board indicated its support for the Vancouver/Whistler 2010 Olympic Committee's bid and their proposal to construct a curling venue at the Nat Bailey Stadium Park site (immediately adjacent to the stadium) for the Olympic Games.

The Board has also approved the Aquatics Review Study that proposes Percy Norman Pool be redeveloped as a City-wide pool facility.

DISCUSSION

The Board's endorsement of the Vancouver Whistler 2010 Olympic bid included a number of new and renovated facilities to be used during the games and then returned to the community as ongoing legacies. The venue for curling has been sited at Nat Bailey Stadium Park in the bid proposal. When the Games are over, the facility will have the flexibility to also serve as an ice arena and support the community's recreation needs.

An announcement on the Host City for the 2010 Olympic Games will be made in July 2003.

If Vancouver is the successful bid, master planning of this site for the 2010 Games will identify and define access, parking, building siting, co-relationships between existing building and facilities etc. and will guide the future changes and/or modifications to Nat Bailey Stadium and the other facilities in this park. Some considerations of the City-wide aquatic facility may also occur. This planning work should be completed before the Board considers any proposals for use of the Stadium beyond 2003. However, until the announcement, a short term one year lease renewal of Nat Bailey Stadium is proposed.

Vancouver Canadians Proposal

The Vancouver Canadians have played at Nat Bailey Stadium for many years, first as a AAA level professional baseball team and now as a Single A (short season) professional team. The current owner, Fred Hermann, has built strong partnerships with amateur baseball locally through UBC, who play their home games at Nat Bailey, the Vancouver Community Baseball Association and a small College league that also use the stadium.

Although the Canadians have approached staff with a longer term proposal, they are aware of the potential use of the adjacent park for an Olympic venue and would be prepared to accept a one year lease extension for 2003 as an interim solution pending the outcome of the decision on the 2010 Olympic Host City in July 2003 and the planning work that would be required for the site.

As an existing tenant, the Vancouver Canadians have met all of their obligations under their present lease agreements with the Board and have promoted baseball both in the community and in the city. Staff are recommending that they continue at Nat Bailey in 2003.

Canadian Baseball League

In April 2002, staff first met with Tony Riviera, President and CEO of the Canadian Baseball League, who introduced the concept of a new independent international professional league that is being planned for Canada. Although a professional league, CBL is not affiliated with any major league team.

The League is interested in fielding between 8-12 teams across Canada and a venue in Vancouver is very important to them. They continue to negotiate for venues in Western Canada with cities such as Regina, Saskatoon, Lethbridge, Kelowna as well as others, with an inaugural season planned for 2003. As a new organization, they will be structuring teams and supporting organizations as they confirm their venues.

In our discussions with CBL, staff have made them aware of the impending Olympic decision and the need for the Board to understand the ramifications of that decision on the Nat Bailey Stadium Park site and the Stadium and the need for an interim solution until that announcement of the 2010 Olympic Host City has been made.

CBL however, has requested that a new lease for 2003 for Nat Bailey Stadium be prepared to include a requirement for the facility to be shared. The Vancouver Canadians have indicated that they and both their parent club, the Oakland Athletics and the President of the North West League, are not prepared to entertain this request because of the logistical problems associated with scheduling, concessions, advertising, sharing clubhouse facilities and maintaining the quality of field conditions. Additional parking impacts will be associated with this shared proposal. CBL have also suggested that they could draw an additional 4,000 fans (on average) to each of these games increasing the impact on the existing residential neighbourhood.

Staff would not recommend the sharing of Nat Bailey in 2003 when the two parties are not in agreement, when community baseball groups will be displaced and when the impact on the residential community will be greater than it is now.

If Nat Bailey Stadium Park is not required for an Olympic venue, staff will report back to the Board in the Fall of 2003 on the alternatives for the lease of Nat Bailey Stadium for 2004 and beyond.

SUMMARY

Although staff have been approached by both the current tenant the Vancouver Canadians and the CBL with proposals to enter into a multi-year agreement to lease Nat Bailey Stadium after the existing lease ends December 2002, it would be premature to consider these before July 2003 when the decision on the Host City for the 2010 Olympics is announced. The interim approach proposed is a one year lease extension for 2003 with the Vancouver Canadians as the existing tenant.

Further planning work will be required to determine the impact of a potential new curling venue on the entire Nat Bailey Stadium Park site as well as the Stadium if Vancouver is awarded the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Staff will also report back to the Board in the Fall of 2003 on alternatives for a lease of the Stadium for 2004 and beyond, if another Olympic Host City is chosen.

Prepared by:

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