



Late Report
Date: April 4, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Special Event Request - Cirque du Soleil

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve the use of a portion of Cooper's Park to Cirque du Soleil from June 17, 2003 to August 22, 2003 as part of the location for the Cirque du Soleil "Alegria" performance and authorize the General Manager to sign a license agreement with Cirque de Soleil permitting such use, on terms and conditions acceptable to the General Manager .

POLICY

The Board requires that major events not included on the annually approved Special Event Calendar and/or are in variance with one or more Park Board by-laws or guidelines require Board approval.

The permitting of exclusive use of park area for a commercial event requires Board approval.

BACKGROUND

Cirque du Soleil is an international organization founded in Quebec in 1984. Their innovative theatrical performances are highly popular throughout the world. They are scheduled to perform in Vancouver this summer on the Concord Pacific site between Cooper's Park and the Plaza of Nations.

The performance will be under a Grand Chapiteau (Big Top). Similar to an amphitheater, the Grand Chapiteau seats 2500 spectators per show with a central, circular revolving stage. The show is a live entertainment performance based on a theatrical approach to circus acts involving the trapeze, aerial artists, contortionists and clowns. There will be approximately 40 performances beginning July 10, 2003 until August 10, 2003.

The configuration requirements for Grand Chapiteau can not be accommodated solely on the Concord property. The event organizers are requesting permission from the Board to use a 210 by 50 ft² area along the northern boundary of Cooper's Park to tether the tent (the structures and main entrance way are on the Concord site). The area in question will be altered by removing portions of the grass turf and three small trees as well as installing temporary works. The event organizer would be responsible for fully restoring the site on completion of the event.

DISCUSSION

Requests from commercial event organizers such as Cirque du Soleil are reviewed and evaluated on a case by case basis. The criteria used to evaluate commercial events includes whether the activity falls within the Park's mandate as well as the impact the activity will have on existing uses/users of the park and the surrounding neighbourhood. Performing arts activities under tents do fall under the Board's mandate and currently occur in Vanier Park (Bard on the Beach, Children's Festival). The impact of this proposal on the park uses and users would be minimal as the site is adjacent to a parking lot and is not in a highly used area of the park. The majority of the park's facilities/activities are located in other areas of the park (i.e., seawall, playground). This specific area of the park is a dog off leash area. The impact of the event will be minimal as the majority of the park would still be available for this activity. There are no adjacent residential buildings.

The Board does not have a set fee schedule for commercial events as we negotiate a fee on a case by case basis. Staff have negotiated a \$13,000 fee as reasonable compensation for the exclusive use of this area.

If approved by the Board, Cirque du Soleil will provide all the necessary permits and insurance coverage as per City requirements and will be required to comply with all applicable laws. A license agreement between Cirque du Soleil and the Vancouver Park Board will include details regarding site preparation, restoration, and an obligation to pay any additional costs incurred during their occupancy of the northern portion of the park. Staff have requested that Cirque du Soleil donate a number of tickets for community groups to attend performances.

The urgency for this report relates to the event organizer's desire to begin selling tickets for this event. Staff recommend approving this request subject to a signed license agreement.

SUMMARY

Cirque du Soleil is a renowned theatrical company. This event will provide the opportunity for Vancouver residents to experience a spectacular artistic performance of world class dimensions.

Prepared by:

Stanley District
Board of Parks & Recreation
Vancouver, BC