



Date: February 1, 2005

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Vancouver Friends for Life Society – Lease Renewal

RECOMMENDATION

- A. *THAT the Board approve a 10 year lease renewal from March 1, 2005 to February 28, 2015 to the Vancouver Friends for Life Society for the use of Weeks House at 1459 Barclay Street based on the terms and conditions outlined in the existing lease.***
- 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.***

BACKGROUND

The Weeks House is a former residence at the corner of Nicola Street and Barclay Street in Barclay Heritage Square. It was named after its first inhabitant, George W. Weeks, who opened Vancouver's first Hudson's Bay company store on Cordova Street in 1887. After being purchased by the City, the exterior and foundations of this designated heritage building were stabilized by the Board in 1990 at a total cost of approximately \$147,000. The City's Heritage Committee supported the changes.

In 1991 a request for proposals (RFP) was conducted for a non-profit community service organization to renovate and restore the interior and occupy the Weeks House. The potential occupant would pay all operating expenses and in return the Board would give a lease at a nominal cost. An interested organization was approved in principle by the Board but failed to secure the funds that were required for the renovations.

In 1994 an RFP was advertised again, and the Vancouver Friends for Life Society (the Society), who had outgrown their existing premises in the West End came forward as a potential new tenant for Weeks House. The Society offered to contribute \$225,000 towards the required renovations that included a new elevator and the conversion of the attic to offices. In the end, a total of \$560,000 was either contributed by the Society or their supporters towards the building's restoration.

On January 30, 1995 the Board agreed to lease Weeks House to the Vancouver Friends for Life Society for ten years at \$1.00 per annum with a ten year option to renew. The Society has written to the Board stating that they wish to exercise their option to renew the lease. The Board is obligated to renew the lease under the same conditions except for the right of a further renewal and the amount of rent.

DISCUSSION

The Vancouver Friends for Life Society operates a comprehensive health and wellness centre that offers emotional, psychological, spiritual and practical support to people living with life-threatening illnesses and their caregivers. The Society currently has just over 1700 active members, accessing a diverse range of services offered free of charge. They are able to provide these services at no charge due to the key contributions of qualified facilitators and many other volunteers. Services include bodywork (massage therapy, shiatsu, Reiki, reflexology), yoga, and meditation.

The Society also offers a comprehensive nutrition program that provided over 7500 meals a year, and a drop-in centre and resource library that is open seven days a week. For those members who are unable to visit Weeks House, the Society offers in-home care through a Home Team Program.

The Society has provided evidence of insurance required by the Board and has carried out a recent Building Inspection report as required in the lease. The building is in good condition and has been well maintained during the first 10 year term. A recent tour of the facility by the Society's Executive Director was given to staff and there are no outstanding issues with regard to the option to renew the lease for a further 10 years.

It is not recommended to change the rent to the Society (\$1.00 per annum) as it is a nominal amount consistent with other non-profit societies and groups that lease our facilities for recreational programs.

SUMMARY

The Vancouver Friends for Life Society carry out a valuable service for the community and have maintained the premises, Weeks House, in good condition during their first ten years of their lease.

Prepared by:

pj
Stanley District
Board of Parks & Recreation
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