

Date: December 21, 2007



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Connaught Park Farmers Market

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve a special event permit for Your Local Farmers Market Society to operate a Farmers Market on the Kitsilano Rink Parking lot at Connaught Park as outlined in the staff report.

POLICY

The Board grants permits for the use of parkland to conduct events, subject to conditions established by the Board and with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

BACKGROUND

Since 1995, Your Local Farmers' Market Society (YLFMS), a registered not-for-profit society registered in British Columbia, has been working with Vancouver's communities to establish neighbourhood-based authentic farmers markets. The goal of YLFMS is to create outdoor markets within an urban setting that are regular community events focusing on the growing, harvesting and sharing of local food. They currently operate markets at park locations in Vancouver on an annual basis during the spring, summer and fall seasons at John Hendry Park, Hillcrest Park and, in the West End, at Lord Roberts School.

In April 2007, YLFMS approached the Park Board with a proposal to operate a market, with approximately thirty vendors, in the Kitsilano Rink parking lot in Connaught Park on Sundays from 10am – 2pm from July 15 to October 14, 2007. The proposal was considered at the Park Board Planning Committee meeting on May 8, 2007, where approval was received to proceed conditional on positive support resulting from a community consultation process.

The three week public consultation process began on May 12, 2007 and included printed notification delivered within a 3 block radius of the proposed site, an Open House at Kitsilano Community Centre on Monday May 28, 2007 and the Park Board comment line and email. The consultation results were very positive with 176 signatures and over 100 emails in favour of the proposal. There were no responses against the proposal. Two responses were in favour but indicated how important it would be to monitor the parking in the area during the market. Additional support for the farmers market was expressed by key partners and stakeholders in the area including the Area Resident Associations, the local Business Association and the Kitsilano War Memorial Community Centre Association.

Based on these positive results, staff proceeded with the pilot project and issued a special event permit to YLFMS to operate the farmers market at Kitsilano for the 2007 summer/fall season for 14 weeks from July 15th to October 14th.

DISCUSSION

YLFMS is interested in continuing to operate at this site in 2008 and beyond.

In evaluating the pilot for future consideration of an annual permit, there are a number of considerations which were unique to the experience last year. First, the Kitsilano Community Centre, Fitness Centre and Rink facilities were closed from July 23 to October 10, 2007, for 12 weeks due to the labour disruption. As well, the field in Connaught Park adjacent to the parking lot was under construction and therefore park visits and associated parking demands were not at normal levels. As a result, staff and the YLFMS representatives have not been able to fully evaluate the 2007 Farmers Market pilot project. In order to complete a proper evaluation and assess the benefits and potential impacts, staff are recommending that Park Board approve a further one year permit for YLFMS to operate as a pilot project.

The organization has applied for a special event permit and, subject to the approval of the Board, a permit will be issued where the Society would be required to meet the necessary insurance requirements, permit conditions of use and will be charged a special event fee.

The Kitsilano War Memorial Community Centre Association has been consulted and is supportive of the continuation of the Farmers Market pilot project for the upcoming year.

Staff will monitor the event during the 2008 season and an evaluation of the project will be completed with YLFMS in the fall. If the responses to the Farmers Market are positive and the impacts are minimal then this event will be included as an annual special event in the annual special event report that is presented to the Park Board in December of each year.

SUMMARY

"Your Local Farmers' Market Society's" request to continue to operate a Farmers Market in the Kitsilano Rink parking lot adjacent to Connaught Park provides an enjoyable opportunity for the local residents and the community to access a fresh produce market as well as participate in a weekly event. The positive feedback from the community and participation at the 2007 Farmers Market supports the continuation of this pilot project.

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