

Date: May 27, 2008



**TO:** Board Members – Vancouver Park Board  
**FROM:** General Manager – Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Bright Nights - Renewal of Agreement with BC Professional Fire Fighters’ Burn Fund and CUPE Local 1004

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## RECOMMENDATION

- A. *THAT the Agreement with the BC Professional Fire Fighters’ Burn Fund and CUPE Local 1004 for Bright Nights in Stanley Park be renewed for the period July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2013.***
- B. *THAT the Board transfers a 13% share of the Bright Nights net admission revenues annually to the BC Professional Fire Fighters’ Burn Fund.***
- C. *THAT no legal rights shall arise and no consents, permissions or licenses 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.***
- D. *THAT once the form of all legal documentation has been approved by the General Manager and Director of Legal Services for the city of Vancouver, that the General Manager be authorised to execute and deliver such documentation on behalf of the Board.***

## POLICY

Sharing of revenues with a charitable institution is not considered to be a grant, so Council approval is not required.

## BACKGROUND

Every December since 1980, a Christmas Train has operated in Stanley Park. In 1997, staff were approached by the BC Professional Fire Fighters’ Burn Fund (Burn Fund), which was seeking a new site for the “Winter Wonderland” Christmas lights display. This display had been operating for 10 years at a private home in Surrey, as a fundraiser for the Vancouver General Hospital Burn Unit.

In 1998, the Board approved entering into a five year agreement with the Burn Fund to jointly operate "Bright Nights in Stanley Park". The Burn Fund purchased the display from the homeowners and transferred it to the Board. Few, if any, of the items included in this original asset transfer remain, since most of the original ones have now been replaced by new lights and displays purchased by, or donated to, the Burn Fund.

When the initial five year operating agreement expired on June 30, 2003, the Board approved extending it for five years, to June 30, 2008. The parties now wish to extend it for five more years and have agreed in principle upon the proposed terms.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Event**

Bright Nights currently runs for approximately 35 days annually, from late November/early December to the weekend after New Year. It has well over one million lights and is one of the largest seasonal lights display in Canada.

Since 2000, Mortal Coil Performance Society has provided performance and entertainment elements of Bright Nights, with at least three performers on site nightly. In addition, Fire Fighter bands, other musicians and choirs volunteer their services and about 200 other volunteers, primarily high school students, assist in various capacities.

Over 96,000 people rode the train and visited the Children's Farmyard during the 2007 Bright Nights event. Many more came just to view the plaza lights. Admission to the plaza area is free. A ticket is required to ride the train and visit the farmyard. Ticket prices for the 2008 event are: Adult \$8.00, Discount (child, youth & senior) \$5.00.

Net revenues to the Board from the 2007 event were approximately \$175,000.

Up to 50% of each day's tickets are sold in advance through Ticketmaster. The other 50%, plus any tickets not sold by Ticketmaster, are sold on-site, for same day train rides only. Leisure Access and group rates are available for the on-site ticket sales. This combination of options for ticket purchase has generally worked well for event patrons.

### **The Burn Fund**

The Burn Fund is a registered charity established in 1978 by the BC Professional Fire Fighters' Association. The revenue it raises from Bright Nights contributes to assisting burn survivors and their families, purchase of equipment, training of medical staff and the operation of a summer camp for young burn survivors.

### **The Agreement**

The operating arrangements in the agreement renewal will continue the practice of the last five years at Bright Nights. Park Board staff are responsible for all of the displays inside the Miniature Railway area and the Children's Farmyard. Fire Fighters volunteer their time to put up and maintain the Burn Fund's lights and displays in the Plaza area.

Fire Fighters are on-site every night to collect donations to the Burn Fund. It also receives a 13% share of the train and farmyard admission revenues. The total amount collected by the Burn Fund from the 2007 event was over \$270,000. Of this amount, \$72,000 was from its share of admission revenues and the balance was from donations.

The Burn Fund has agreed to the proposed terms of the new agreement. There will be no substantial changes from the current agreement and the Burn Fund's share of admission revenues will remain at 13%.

### **CUPE Local 1004 Approval**

CUPE Local 1004 is a party to this agreement and has agreed to the proposed five year renewal. When the event was initially proposed in 1997, concerns were expressed as to whether allowing Fire Fighter volunteers to put up and take down the lights and displays in the Plaza would impact on the hours worked by its members at the Christmas event. To deal with these concerns, the agreements have guaranteed these staff members a minimum of 1300 auxiliary hours for installing, maintaining and taking down the event's lights and displays, unless there is a substantial change in the Board's commitment to the event. With the continued expansion of the event and displays, staff have worked well in excess of those hours each year since then.

### **SUMMARY**

Bright Nights in Stanley Park is a very popular event and is a regular part of the Christmas season tradition for many families. The partnership with the Burn Fund has enhanced the event and allowed significant amounts to be raised annually for its programs.

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