

DATE: June 7, 1995

SUBJECT: PAY TENNIS CONCESSION AT KITSILANO BEACH

RECOMMENDATION

That the Park Board continue the Pay Tennis Concession at Kitsilano Beach for the duration of the concessionaire's contract

POLICY

That the Board allow a variety of tennis activities including lesson programs, tournaments, tennis clubs and pay tennis on Park Board tennis courts.

That the Board annually evaluate the operation of pay tennis concessions (e.g., hours of operation, season of play, etc.).

That the Board investigate establishing additional pay tennis concessions.

- 1994 Tennis Policy

BACKGROUND

Pay tennis has been in effect in Stanley Park, May to September, since the early 1980's. Designed originally to resolve disputes during prime hours, to equitably distribute playing time and maximize court usage, pay tennis has proven successful in the Stanley Park location although there was initial resistance.

The operation of pay tennis concessions was reviewed as a part of the Board's 1994 Tennis Policy Review. Players opinions ranged from eliminating to expanding the pay tennis operation. Players in favour of pay tennis stated that reserved court access allows people with time constraints to play tennis (e.g., work commitments, childcare, etc.). In addition, pay tennis precedures allow for reserving more than the 1/2 hour of court time permitted under the conditions of use for casual tennis play. Players who were not in favour of pay tennis suggested that the existence of pay courts place more pressure on adjacent public courts. There was some consensus that if pay tennis is to be programmed, at least 50% of the courts at the site remain public (no charge) courts.

As a result of the Tennis Policy Review, the Board adopted the recommendations (as outlined above) made in the 1994 Vancouver Park Board Tennis Policy report.

As part of the Budget Management Plan, the Board approved the expansion of pay tennis to include Kitsilano Beach and Queen Elizabeth Park. Resurfacing of the Queen Elizabeth tennis courts, situated on the Kersland Reservoir has been delayed for over two years pending a G.V.R.D. seismic study. Once the results of this study are known and it is possible to resurface these courts, it is planned to include Queen Elizabeth in the pay tennis program.

It is important to note that the Board's primary reason for operating pay tennis concessions relates to the provision of service (e.g.,

reserved court time option, lessons, tennis ladders, childrens' "camps") rather than revenue generation. This is reflected in the recommendations made in Vancouver Park Board Tennis Policy:

- 50% of the courts at the concession site must operate as public courts;
- fee schedule is based on similar Park Board facilities (racketball, squash);
- demand for service will influence the concession's season of operation, hours of operation (evaluated annually).

At the April 10, 1995 meeting, the Board granted Professional Tennis Services Limited (Patricio Gonzalez) approval to operate a pay tennis concession on 5 courts at Kitsilano Beach and 9 courts at Stanley Park.

DISCUSSION

The pay tennis concession at Kitsilano Beach has been in operation for less than 1 month. Staff feel that in order to fairly evaluate the effectiveness of any operation there should be a longer review period. A monthly review of prime and non prime time bookings, and total revenues will be conducted with the potential for an adjustment in hours of operation or prime time designations.

The Board is bound by a contract agreement with Professional Tennis Services Limited to operate the concession but they have indicated a willingness to evaluate hours of operation as the summer progresses. Such a review will be done regularly through the Recreation Services Committee.

The following information is provided for clarification on some of the issues raised at the June 5th meeting of the Park Board:

Kitsilano Concession Revenue Estimates:

In terms of revenue generation, pay tennis has annually provided the Board with an average of \$12,000 in revenues from the Stanley Park operation. Based on per court revenues in Stanley Park, averaged over the past 3 years of operation and in consideration of associated costs, staff estimated \$4,700 in potential gross revenue per court to the Board from the Kitsilano location. Given the opportunity to run a tennis concession unimpeded, staff believe this is still possible.

The Kitsilano Pay Tennis Program:

While the show of support against the pay tennis facility at Kitsilano Beach is impressive it should also be noted that staff have received a number of calls and letters in support of pay tennis at Kitsilano. A number of these individuals have also reported intimidation and a level of discomfort which continues in the form of anti pay tennis signage and continuing verbal abuse. This situation makes assessment of the real potential of pay tennis in this location difficult to determine.

The Tennis Concession & Contract:

There appears to be some misunderstanding about the status of a concession operation and the governing contract with the Board. Staff examined the feasibility of hiring staff on an hourly basis to operate pay tennis but determined that a contract agreement would provide a higher level of financial return to the Board as well as a better level of service to the user. Lessons are a part of this

agreement. The Board receives its share of the court rental for the lesson and a percentage of the lesson fee. Lessons are limited to non prime hours. The contract is an incentive to the contractor to maximize the rental potential but it also increases the revenue to the Board at the same time.

The contract for the Tennis Concession followed the procedures required by the City. The individual engaged by the Board has a 15 year history working for community centres in the operation of tennis programs. All credentials and references have been checked and rechecked.

Tennis Concession Procedures:

The tennis concession operates on the basis of numbered tickets. This is a system used in a number of Park Board facilities, namely the pitch and putt courses and until recent computerization, the ice rinks and pools. It is an approved procedure by the City Auditor. Staff are satisfied that all procedures are being followed as required. The Board receives financial accounting statements on a monthly basis but staff and the operator communicate on a daily basis regarding the status of both locations. All staff hired through the tennis concession have legal work permits if they are not Canadian citizens.

CONCLUSION

This new program requires a longer period of unimpeded operation before it can be objectively evaluated. Recognizing the current low usage of the pay tennis courts at Kitsilano, a monthly review of the situation, both of revenue and prime/non prime usage, is a viable solution given the variety of issues surrounding this matter. The existing contract with the concessionaire is for the 1995 season only. Pay tennis in this location and the nature of the contract will be thoroughly reviewed at the end of the season.

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