

September 5, 1996

SUBJECT: LUBAVITCH CENTRAL ORGANIZATION FOR JEWISH EDUCATION - Request
for Free Admission to VanDusen Gardens - September 15, 1996

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the Lubavitch Central Organization for Jewish Education be
charged admission to VanDusen Gardens on September 15, 1996.

BACKGROUND

A request for free admission to VanDusen Gardens has been made by Rabbi Wineberg on behalf of the Lubavitch Organization for the purpose of conducting a prayer service on September 15, 1996. For the past several years, the Group has held a prayer service at VanDusen Gardens on the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hoshana.

During the Rosh Hoshana period Orthodox Jews are not permitted to use anything that is mechanical or electrical and therefore must walk to a site. VanDusen is the chosen site because it has a body of water (which is important to the prayer ceremony) and it is closer than Queen Elizabeth Park (4 blocks vs 12) making it an easier walk for the elderly members of their group. Orthodox Jews are also not allowed to handle money, pay for anything or accept payment during this period. In order to accommodate the Lubavitch Central Organization, VanDusen Gardens is willing to accept payment for admission prior to the event or to invoice the Group for the amount due after the event.

On September 6, 1993, our records indicated that 46 adults and 25 youth attended the service. No admission was paid, nor was any arrangement for free admission made previous to the visit. A request for payment was made by Roy Forster on September 24, 1993. Payment was not received.

On September 6, 1994, a group of 43 adults and 32 youths arrived at VanDusen Gardens for the prayer service. No previous arrangement had been made for free admission. Special admission was granted by Roy Forster and the organization was invoiced for the amount of \$242.40. This was paid October 20, 1994.

In 1995, a request for free admission for up to 25 was made by Rabbi Wineberg. On the day of Rosh Hoshana at least 110 people from the group arrived. A letter granting free admission was sent but followed up with a letter from the General Manager indicating that this privilege was granted for 1995 only and that the Board would need to consider any further free admission privilege in 1996.

DISCUSSION

Each year, there are numerous requests by groups and individuals for free or reduced admission to VanDusen Gardens for a variety of reasons. Occasionally, complimentary passes are issued to individuals who make a

donation or provide a service. Complimentary passes have also been issued to charitable groups as prizes for fund raising events in return for advertising at the event. This practice has been suspended, however, because of the proliferation of requests that are received from fund raisers.

Members of the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association, under our Joint Operating Agreement, are given free access to the Garden except for certain special events.

The request for free admission to VanDusen Gardens by the Lubavitch Organization goes beyond the issuance of a few complimentary passes. Because of the large number of participants and the fact that this is an annual event, the granting of free admission might be viewed as unequitable and therefore unfair by other groups and organizations. In our past correspondence with Rabbi Wineberg, staff have been quite clear in stating that the Lubavitch Organization would be required to pay admission. In an effort to treat all users of VanDusen Gardens in the same way the admission policy provides for a reduced rate for groups. The Lubavitch Central Organization for Jewish Education would be charged this rate.

There does not appear to be any compelling reason for the Board to change its admission policy to provide free admission for this group.

Prepared by:
Environment and Operations Division
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