

Date: May 14, 1997

SUBJECT: LIONS SOCIETY OF B.C. "FANTASY OF LIGHTS" EVENT  
REQUEST AT QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

RECOMMENDATION:

***THAT the Board approve the request of the Lions Society of B.C. to hold the "Fantasy of Lights" event in Queen Elizabeth Park from Friday, December 5 to Wednesday, December 24, 1997, from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm on Sunday through Thursday and from 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm on Friday and Saturday, at no cost to the Board, and with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.***

**POLICY:**

***Special events of a new or unusual nature are brought to the Board for individual approval.***

***New events, operated by or for a non profit organization, which propose an access restricted by fencing and an admission fee require separate Board approval.***

BACKGROUND:

The Lion's Society of B.C. is a provincial organization that raises funds to provide special programs and services to children with disabilities and their families. This organization is requesting permission from the Board to hold a fundraising event, the "Fantasy of Lights", in Queen Elizabeth Park. This event is based on a fundraising prototype developed by Easter Seals in Evansville, Indiana. It has since been run successfully in a number of other cities.

The event consists of an installation of twenty five light displays with 500,000 glistening lights along 0.9 kilometre of the Queen Elizabeth Park perimeter roadway (**Parkway**). The displays are in a variety of shapes and sizes, some of which may be nine metres high. The request includes approval to operate for three weeks in December and charge an admission fee.

The Lions Club of B.C. is requesting approval to operate this event, the Fantasy of Lights, starting on Friday, December 5, to Wednesday, December 24, 1997. The hours of operation will be from 5:00 to 9:00 pm Sunday through Thursday and 5:00 to 10:00 pm Friday and Saturday. The display set up and take down will each take approximately a week, giving the event a five week presence on the site.

The twenty five light displays will be installed along the Parkway at

predetermined locations between 33rd Avenue at Midlothian, the entrance, and 33rd Avenue and Kersland Street, the exit. (Appendix A). Vehicles will enter off Cambie from both the North and South and queue along Midlothian Street. Two admission gates will be located at the entrance, the start of the Parkway. Vehicles will travel in two lanes, one way along the Parkway until the exit at 33rd Avenue and Kersland. This is a drive through event. The public will drive along the route at approximately 5-10 km/hr and view the displays from their vehicles.

The fee for entry will be approximately \$7.00 - \$10.00 per car. Tour Buses will be charged a higher fee. Given that this event is a fundraiser, the Lions Society of B.C. is prepared to donate two percent of the net gate admissions to the Park Board. The organizers project that the operation can accommodate about 250 vehicles in an hour.

Each display will be sponsored by a local business and signed accordingly in a uniform and tasteful manner. The light displays will be powered by generators. There will be no amplified sound on site. The organizers will supply 24 hour security in the park for the duration of the event. The organizers will be responsible for all costs and any damage associated with the event.

## DISCUSSION

### **Consultation Process**

In keeping with Board procedures on community consultation, pamphlets were distributed to the neighbouring residents within a two block radius of Queen Elizabeth Park. (Appendix B). Staff received one response from a resident along Midlothian Street who was concerned about the three week duration of the event, the increased traffic during the holiday season and the fumes and pollution from the cars and tour buses driving through the Park.

### **Public meeting**

The pamphlet also notified residents about a public meeting at Riley Park Community Centre on Tuesday April 1st at 7:00pm to discuss the event proposal. Four local residents attended this meeting along with representatives from the Lions Society of B.C., one Commissioner and Staff. The residents expressed concerns about the three week duration of the event during the holiday season, the admission charge and sponsor credits, increased vehicular traffic and tour buses, vehicular pollution, and the overall impact and congestion on the roads, particularly along Midlothian Street and at the 33rd Avenue and Kersland exit.

### **Riley Park Community Association**

The Lions Society of B.C. met with the Riley Park Community Centre Association. The Association Board is supportive of the event provided that the organizers take care to minimize the impact on the local community residents.

### **FEST Committee/ Park Board Staff**

To secure the approval of the City, the Lions Society of B.C. also met with the FEST committee which includes staff representatives from the Engineering Department, Police, Transit and Parks. The FEST committee will require event organizers to comply with the following:

- Signage along the Parkway from the entrance off of Midlothian to the 33rd Avenue exit adjacent to Cambie Street indicating "No Parking" from 4:00-11:00pm.
- Resident parking and access only along Kersland Street in addition to Police and barricades at each end of the street.
- Police at various intersections around the park and neighbourhood to monitor and direct traffic.
- Police at the 33rd Avenue entrance at Midlothian to ensure access and egress to/from the Seasons restaurant and the Bloedel conservatory.

The Lions Society of B.C. also met with Park Board staff from Operations, Electrical, Horticulture and Recreation.

The power requirements for this event are substantial and cannot be supplied by the current system in the park and therefore portable generators will be required. Horticulture staff met on site to determine the twenty five light display locations. Staff will monitor the display installations and assess any damage to the grassed areas at the completion of the event.

To address the issues raised through the community consultation process and staff concerns, the Lions Society of B.C. is proposing to:

- set up signage along Midlothian Street to advise vehicles how to access the event.
- reroute traffic along Clancy Loranger Way into the Nat Bailey Stadium lot if required because of congestion.
- position marshalls at various points along Midlothian Street, at the entrance to the Park, along the route and at the exit, to inform the public of how to proceed and to keep the vehicles moving along the route. The marshalls will also monitor and direct any walkers/cyclists that attend the event.
- provide security professionals and volunteers on a 24 hour basis to secure the light displays.
- provide "quiet" generators to power the light displays and position these amongst the trees with coverings to muffle any sound.
- work in conjunction with the FEST committee and Park Board staff to minimize impact within the community and the park.
- work in a spirit of cooperation with the VanDusen Gardens Staff and Society to promote the VanDusen lights display and put up a sign at the 33rd Avenue

and Kersland exit to advertise the VanDusen event

This proposal raises a number of issues for consideration like volume of traffic and congestion. Staff believe that the actions required by the City and the further proposals of the Lions Society after the consultation process seem to adequately address these concerns. There are no houses on Midlothian Ave south of Dinmont and no residences on the Park side of 29th or the Parkside of Cambie to 33rd. There are homes along the West side of Kersland but traffic will not be routed onto this street. There will only be exiting traffic at the 33rd intersection.

With respect to a potential competition with the VanDusen Gardens Light Show, the event may, in fact, draw a greater number of people to the area.

The admission charge and sponsor presence is sometimes permitted by the Board, depending on the nature of the event. Given that the purpose of this event is fundraising, it does require approval for these two conditions if the event is to proceed.

#### CONCLUSION:

The "Fantasy of Lights" event will provide a unique opportunity for an enjoyable family holiday experience. It will also provide the Lions Society of B.C. with a fundraising opportunity to provide services for children with disabilities and their families.

Prepared by:  
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