



Date: July 30, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: HELIUM BALLOON RIDE OPERATION AT QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

RECOMMENDATION

THAT approval not be granted for Flying Success Company's proposed helium balloon operation in Queen Elizabeth Park

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on July 20, 1998, the Board deferred its decision on the proposed helium balloon ride until September, to allow time for information to be obtained on two issues:

- (a) the requirements of the proposed E-Comm tower site
- (b) the reaction of the neighbourhood, as expressed in the Queen Elizabeth Park study

DISCUSSION

(a) Requirements of the proposed E-Comm tower site

The proposed site for the E-Comm tower is at the south end of the reservoir, by the Rose Garden. The tower would be linked to other towers in the E-Comm system by microwave beams. The consulting firm acting for E-Comm has indicated that a safety margin of 250 ft from the beam to the tether point of the balloon would be required. This would effectively rule out the site which was being considered for the balloon, between the putting green and the Lawn Bowling Club.

A separate report on the E-Comm Tower proposal will be forthcoming to the Board. Discussions are currently in progress with the Greater Vancouver Water District (GVWD), since the proposed location for the tower sits on GVWD land.

There is currently no other appropriate site in Queen Elizabeth Park where the balloon could be located without requiring the removal of trees.

(b) Public opinion in the Queen Elizabeth Park study

Surveys were carried out by the Queen Elizabeth Park consultants, between August 4, and September 1, 1998, of Vancouver residents and visitors from outside Vancouver. The questions relating to the balloon on these surveys, and the responses to them, are attached as Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

284 responses were received on the survey of Vancouver residents, 206 of which were written ones, filled out and dropped off by neighbourhood residents, and 78 of which were from interviews conducted in the park. 155 of those responding lived within 1 - 3 blocks of the park. There was a clear majority (66%) opposed to the balloon.

The survey of visitors from outside Vancouver was conducted by interviewing 130 park visitors. It showed that 50% of the respondents would likely, or very likely, take a balloon ride if it were available.

The balloon proposal was one of the issues discussed at the public meeting held at Riley Park Community Centre on September 10. The response to the proposal to have this operation in Queen Elizabeth Park was overwhelmingly negative.

CONCLUSION

Until a decision is made on whether the Board will approve the E-Comm tower in its proposed location, it is unclear whether there is any potential site in Queen Elizabeth Park for the balloon operation. However, the survey of residents and the sentiments expressed at the public meeting indicate that the significant opposition from the park's neighbours far outweighs the positive aspects of the proposal.

Mr Edworthy of Flying Success Company has been advised of this recommendation and he understands the reasons for not pursuing his proposal.

Prepared by:
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