

Date: July 2, 1999

SUBJECT: LITTLE MOUNTAIN BASEBALL CLUBHOUSE PROPOSAL

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Board approve in principle the proposal by Little Mountain Baseball to reconstruct the concession/clubhouse structure in Hillcrest Park; conditional to connecting this project to the Board's Master Plan process for the area; subject to all design, financial and legal details to the satisfaction of the Board.**

- B. THAT the Board authorize the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) governing the development and operation of this facility.**

BACKGROUND

As Canada's first Little League, Little Mountain Baseball (LMB) has operated a minor baseball program at Hillcrest Park for forty-eight (48) years. They presently register about 360 children aged 5-12 years living within the catchment area roughly defined as False Creek to the north, 49th Avenue to the south, Oak Street to the west, and Fraser Street to the east. Their number of players has been growing by about ten (10%) percent per year in recent years.

In 2001, Little Mountain Baseball and Little League Canada will celebrate their 50th Anniversary and LMB has been selected to host the 2001 Canadian Little League Championship. In preparation for this major event, LMB has proposed to replace the existing concession/clubhouse structure with a new facility which will better meet the present and future needs of their organization.

The Little League Charter stipulates that LMB must accept any child who wants to play baseball. The LMB concession operation provides revenue to help support children from families that cannot afford to pay registration fees.

DISCUSSION

The proposed new facility is to be a two-storey structure with approximately 1,600 square feet of space. The ground floor is to consist of a concession area, storage spaces and two washrooms; the second floor is to include a meeting room, score keeping area, small office, storage spaces and a washroom.

The initial proposal from LMB was to replace and expand the concession/clubhouse facility in the same location as the present structure. Staff were concerned that

- a) this created too much building "bulk" without sufficient setback from the corner of Midlothian Avenue and Clancy Loranger Way, and
- b) there was a conflict for space with a large tree directly in front of the structure. The options

available to resolve these issues are:

1. Reduce the size of the proposed concession/clubhouse
2. Relocate the structure, bleachers, backstop and ball diamond about 15 feet further north into the Park.

Since a reduced clubhouse would not meet the needs of LMB, option 2 is the preferred solution. It is proposed that the additional costs incurred by this option would be shared as follows:

- Park Board to cover the cost of demolishing and replacing the backstop which is over 15 years old and would have normally been replaced within 5-8 years (estimate \$30,000)
- LMB to cover the cost of moving and remounting the bleachers (estimate \$25,000)

There is Park Board funding available for the backstop replacement in the Capital Budget for Hillcrest Park play field redevelopment; three other backstops on the Park are already being replaced as part of that project.

The proposed LMB concession/clubhouse at 1,600 square feet is larger than other Little League facilities approved recently by the Board — Trout Lake and Dunbar are 1,000-1,200 square feet. However, the proposed LMB facilities also addresses the city-wide need for a high quality Little League tournament facility that is centrally located with adjacent ball diamonds and adequate parking for large crowds.

Consultation

A publicly advertised community meeting was held at Riley Park Community Centre on March 29th, 1999 to permit interested parties to obtain more information and comment on this LMB proposal as well as the overall Hillcrest Park play field improvements. The meeting was attended by about 50 people, as well as LMB representatives and Park Board staff. Those in attendance expressed strong support for this proposed concession/clubhouse reconstruction; there was no opposition or concern expressed about the proposal.

The Riley Park Community Association also supports the LMB proposal, provided that the meeting room be made available for use by other community groups. Little Mountain Baseball has agreed to this community use of space for a reasonable rental fee to recover costs, and other minor sport groups (soccer, youth baseball) have already expressed interest in using the facility for meetings and tournaments on Hillcrest Park.

Master Plan

At its meeting on June 16th, the Board authorized the preparation of a Master Plan to guide future development for Hillcrest Park, Nat Bailey Stadium Park and Riley Park.

The appropriate specific siting and design details for the LMB facility should be connected to the Master Plan process, which could take 6-9 months for conclusion. Little Mountain Baseball has requested that their proposed project be considered as early as possible during the Master Plan

process, in order that they can proceed while volunteer enthusiasm and financial support remains high.

Cost Estimates

Little Mountain Baseball		Park Board	
Concession/clubhouse facility	\$240,000	backstop demolition/replacement, electrical conduit to score box	\$30,000
Utility service connections	10,000		
Bleacher relocation	<u>25,000</u> 275,000		

Financing

Little Mountain Baseball has raised \$120,000 towards this project to date. When combined with donated labour and materials, these funds will enable them to complete the facility to lock-up status. Final interior finishing of the facility will require additional fund-raising by LMB over the next two years. They are discussing with Riley Park Community Association the possibility of submitting a joint application for matching funding through the BC 2000 Community Spirit Grant Program.

Park Board funding of \$30,000 for backstop demolition/replacement and electrical conduit to the outfield score box is available in the Capital Budget for Hillcrest Park play field redevelopment.

Memorandum of Understanding

Following the Board's consideration for this proposal, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be prepared, which will govern the planning and development process to be undertaken to realize this project, including a critical path of timing for the work to be completed.

The MOU will also include terms and conditions for operating/maintaining the facility once completed. It is understood that Little Mountain Baseball will be responsible for annual operating and maintenance costs related to the concession/clubhouse facility.

SUMMARY

This report sets out approval in principle for Little Mountain Baseball to reconstruct the concession/clubhouse structure in Hillcrest Park. The specific siting and design details are to be finalized in a Master Plan process for the area. A Memorandum of Understanding governing the development and operation of the facility will need to be prepared.

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