Date: January 20, 2000

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation

FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: BARD ON THE BEACH SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

RECOMMENDATION

> **THAT the Board approve the expansion of the foot print for the Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival to incorporate a second performance tent into its site and that the Festival be complete and structures dismantled no later than September 30.**

POLICY

At the February 22, 1999 Board meeting, the Board approved a second performance tent for the 1999 season of Bard on the Beach on a trial basis, to be assessed by staff for continuation. The Festival Society requires Board approval in order to incorporate an ongoing second tent into the Festival. (Appendix A).

BACKGROUND

During the summer and fall of 1999 the impacts of a second performance tent and additional performances were assessed based on traffic, parking, noise and effect on park land. These factors were assessed through visual counts of traffic patterns and parking done by Bard staff, site visitations by Park Board staff, meetings with Kits Point Residents Association, review of a traffic and parking study from City of Vancouver Engineering staff and consultation with Park Board Operations and Maintenance staff. (Appendix B).

DISCUSSION

Staff conclude from the assessment during 1999, that there was minimal impact. There was an increase in traffic and parking by approximately 3% during the five week period that there were performances in the second tent. Both the City of Vancouver IBI Traffic study report and the informal parking count done by Bard verified that, on most occasions, there was available parking in lots. The primary times of concern were during the Symphony of Fire evenings where not only were there many casual park users but, in addition both the Maritime Museum and the Pacific Space Centre held events.

The results indicate that there was no significant noise issue with the additional performances. Patrons are reminded to be respectful of the neighbourhood on departure and Bard has agreed to reduce the amplification to the finale music.

The festival organizers have indicated an interest in extending their season to accommodate the full house attendance at their performances however Queen Elizabeth District Operations staff have expressed concern about the site dismantle completion which, if it were any later in the growing season would significantly reduce the success of grass regeneration. It is their opinion that the tents should be dismantled and the re-seeding be complete by the end of September. The park area is highly used between the tenting for the Children's Festival immediately followed by the Shakespeare Festival. Any delay in re-seeding significantly increases the risk of failure.

In 1999 Bard shortened their number of performance weeks by one. If they wish to return to the previous level, this could be accomplished at the onset of the season in June rather than at the end of the season in September. Both Bard and Operations staff agree that in the long term there needs to be some improvement to the ground surface to create a better drainage for a tented festival site that would also improve the area's usability during the balance of the year.

SUMMARY

The organizers of the Bard on the Beach Festival have a history of responding to the concerns of the residents to minimize any negative impact while providing a high calibre, city-wide cultural event that is patronized by more than 45,000 people a season. The second tent and additional five weeks of performances have expanded the opportunity for live theatre as a cultural experience. Staff feel that the increase in traffic, parking and congestion resulting from the second tent do not outweigh to this value. Until a long term solution to drainage is implemented to the park land, completing the festival at a time of the year that would enhance seed generation will assist in its year round usability and beauty.

Prepared by:

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Attachments

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