



Date October 3, 2000

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: CHRISTMAS LIGHTING OF TREES ON BEACH AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board allocate up to \$20,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Account to fund the replacement of the holiday lighting display in the Elm trees at the intersection of Beach Avenue and Bidwell Street.

POLICY

The Board's policy on the approved use of Corporate Sponsorship Funds contains the following criteria:

1. To fund one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will support revenue-generating activities and the money repaid into the Corporate Sponsorship account from the increased revenues within a period of three years.
2. To fund one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will result in improved efficiencies.
3. To fund one-time expenditures over and above the existing funding level in the operating budget which are beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation system.
4. All expenditures require Board approval.

BACKGROUND

In 1988, then Park Board Commissioner George Wainborn suggested to staff that the group of six Elm trees at the intersection of Beach Avenue and Bidwell Street be lighted in celebration of the winter holidays. This was accomplished after power was brought to the rather remote area from the English Bay Bathhouse. Commissioner Wainborn did have many strings of lights donated to the project but because of the number and size of the trees, the donated lights had limited visual impact.

Park Board staff were then requested to further light the trees. They undertook considerable additional electrical modifications and added 450 strings of lights to the display to light the combined canopies of the trees. The height of the trees made it necessary to use high reach equipment and the Vancouver Fire Department donated their trucks to accomplish the time consuming task of stringing the lights.

Due to the considerable labour involved, lights are left in place year around. Each year the strings are inspected and burned out lights are replaced prior to the annual early December lighting. The strings of lights have a five to six year life span at which time they must all be replaced. Six years ago, when the light strings were due for replacement, the Board received the equivalent of a \$4,000 donation in lights and strings from the Lights For Life Society which works in fund-raising for AIDS/Hospice organizations. This sum permitted a partial replacement of the lights and in recognition of that generous donation the trees have since been illuminated on December 1st for World AIDS Day.

DISCUSSION

The seasonal lights at Bidwell Street and Beach Avenue have become a Vancouver tradition in just over a decade and are much loved by residents from all over the City. The trees, in combination with the lighting of the Lost Lagoon Fountain, are free to all who walk or drive by. They impart a multi-coloured magic which is greatly appreciated by the citizens of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland as well as thousands of visiting tourists.

The estimated costs of this project are broken down as follows:

Lights etc	\$5,000
Labour	\$5,000
Equipment Rental	\$10,000

In recent years the Fire Department has assisted with the installation of the lights, but this may

not be possible this year and the equipment rental portion of the budget would be sufficient to cover additional costs if a fire truck were not available.

Staff have approached a number of potential donors in the last couple of weeks, but a commitment could not be secured. Given the need to undertake this work immediately and the project's pressure on the 2000 operating budget, the corporate sponsorship fund is an appropriate alternative to fund this unusual expense.

JUSTIFICATION

The Corporate Sponsorship Fund is an appropriate funding source to refurbish a seasonal light display which is highly anticipated and appreciated by the public each year. The expenditure meets the funding criteria established by the Board for this fund in that the replacement of the display is over and above the existing funding level in the operating budget.

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