



March 12, 2001

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Communication Plan

RECOMMENDATION

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| <p>A. THAT the Board receive the attached Communication Plan (<i>Appendix A</i>) as prepared by Optimum Public Relations and</p> <p>B. THAT staff report back to the Board with an implementation plan following a consultation process.</p> |
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BACKGROUND

In 1997 a general survey conducted for the Park Board concluded that the public's awareness of the Board's mandate, goals and services should be improved. A key task in the Park Board Strategic Plan is to build a service focused organization. To address this goal, it is important to enhance public awareness, profile and support for the broad range of high-quality programs and services provided by the Board throughout the City. It is equally important to build internal understanding and support among staff in order to become a service focused organization. Staff had also been concerned about internal communications amongst staff whose numbers and work places had changed substantially over the past several decades. The communication plan will include strategies to address both external and internal communication challenges. At its meeting of January 10th, 2000, the Board passed a motion approving the retention of Optimum Public Relations to carry out a system wide communication audit and to report back with a strategic communication plan to be implemented over the next three to five years. The mandate set out for the consultant was: to assess the Park Board's communication mechanisms and resources; to research internal and external opinions; to identify issues and challenges; to set out strategic goals and objectives; to create a plan of communication activities; to develop implementation recommendations; to provide measurement models and to develop an issues management framework.

DISCUSSION

The research was conducted more than a seven month period with a first draft report. It involved all pertinent staff, Park commissioners and stakeholders in an information and research audit in

order to assess our present status while forming the foundation of the Plan. A first draft was submitted at the end of September 2000. Following the civic strike, the Senior Management Team reviewed the plan for input. The plan was presented to the Park Board Commissioners on February 19th, 2001 by the consultants. The Plan outlines the project mandate, research methodology and findings, issues and challenges and strategic approach in communication. The strategic approach recommended by the consultant includes creation of goals and objectives, and a detailed tactical plan for each objective.

SUMMARY

In order to ensure an effective Communication Plan is implemented to address both internal and external communication, it is recommended that the Board receive the Communication Plan as prepared by the Optimum Public Relations and approve staff carrying out a consulting process. It will include sharing of the consultant's audit findings, defining communication goals and objectives and seeking essential feedback from staff and stakeholders as to the development of a plan of action. Following the consultation process, staff will report back to the Board with an implementation plan. It is projected that this will take six to nine months.

Prepared by:

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