



Date: April 9, 2001

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: JAN EISENHARDT VISIT**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

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| <p><b>A. That Park Board approve the allocation of up to \$5,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship Fund to cover the travel, accommodation and event costs associated with the visit of Jan Eisenhardt in July of this year;</b></p> <p><b>B. That the Board invite Mayor and Council, and other interested parties, to a reception celebration honouring Jan Eisenhardt's pioneer achievements in public recreation and fitness leadership development.</b></p> |
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## **POLICY**

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

- a 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.
- b To fund initiatives with one-time expenditures to a limit of \$50,000 that will result in improved efficiencies.
- c 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.
- d All expenditures require Board approval.

## **BACKGROUND**

Jan (Ian) Eisenhardt was Supervisor of Recreation for the Vancouver Park Board from 1931 to 1934 and subsequently, from 1934 to 1939, the first Director of Recreation and Physical Education for the Provincial Education Ministry.

During the depths of the Great Depression, Jan Eisenhardt's leadership and innovation had a profound positive impact on the lives of thousands of young British Columbians. While with the Park Board, he created Vancouver's "Winter Fieldhouse Program" providing low-cost recreation and fitness activities to the City's unemployed youth. Then, with the Education Ministry, he founded "Pro-Rec" which established similar programming through a network of "recreation centres" throughout the province. The post World War II campaign of community centre construction in Vancouver and elsewhere in the Province was inspired by these pioneering initiatives.

At the age of 94, Jan Eisenhardt maintains a highly active lifestyle. Last year he participated in two long distance runs in his native Denmark. He is a tireless campaigner for physical education in schools and a strong advocate for the development of the Trans-Canada Trail.

Jan Eisenhardt was recently honoured with an induction into the Order of Canada and a Lifetime Achievement Award from Sports Canada, mainly for his pioneering achievements in physical fitness promotion both nationally and internationally. A list of highlights from Eisenhardt's extraordinary career is appended to this report.

## **DISCUSSION**

Last year, after being named to Order of Canada, Jan Eisenhardt was interviewed on CBC radio about his career at the national and international levels. Staff happened to hear the broadcast and, through previous research, connected this "Jan" Eisenhardt with the "Ian" Eisenhardt who was a prominent employee of the Park Board so many decades ago. A telephone call quickly verified that this was indeed the same man. Subsequent phone conversations and correspondence have lead to this proposal for a reunion visit.

Jan Eisenhardt currently resides in Dorval, Quebec. Aside from one brief stop-over in the 1970s while on vacation with his wife, he has not been to the West Coast since 1939. When the suggestion was made that he re-visit the City and the Province to which he contributed so much, his response was, "This would be even better than the Order of Canada!" By mutual agreement, the goal of his visit is to combine reunion, celebration and exercise over a 4-5 day period:

The reunion aspect would be a chance for Eisenhardt to reconnect with the places and people he once knew, and with the institutions that he helped to build -- notably the recreation services of the Vancouver Park Board and the Province of British Columbia. The celebration aspect would show Eisenhardt what has evolved from his pioneering efforts, together with formal recognition and thanks by the Park Board and possibly other official bodies. As for exercise, Eisenhardt has suggested a run with children on the Stanley Park Seawall.

The visit would be "beneficial to the overall Parks and Recreation system" in the following ways:

- The Board would honour past accomplishments which have faded from common memory;
- Leaders and participants in public recreation today would learn about how these valued services originated and evolved;
- Jan Eisenhardt would be an inspiring example of fitness and healthy living for seniors and for youth.

Here is a tentative itinerary for the visit, scheduled for July 2001:

- Day One: Arrival and Hotel check in. Informal visits to Administration Building and Stanley Park Pavilion; tour around Stanley Park.
- Day Two: Tour of facilities and parks across the City in morning. Afternoon reunion with Pro-Rec staff and other former colleagues and friends.
- Day Three: Lumberman's Arch to Brockton Point run with Park Playground and Community Centre Day Camp participants.
- Day Four: Day trip to Legislative Buildings in Victoria to meet with Recreation Branch officials.
- Day Five: Civic Reception, hosted by the Park Board
- Day Six: Departure

## **SUMMARY**

The Board is asked to approve spending of up to \$5,000 from the Corporate Sponsorship fund to cover the cost of bringing Jan Eisenhardt to Vancouver, and to make his visit to Vancouver a memorable occasion for him, his friends, admirers and former colleagues.

Prepared by:

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