

Date: April 12, 2007



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Engine 374 Pavilion Agreement

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Board enter into an agreement with the West Coast Railway Association and the Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Society for a three year period (July 25, 2006 to July 24, 2009);*
- B. THAT once the agreement has been approved by the General Manager and the Directors of Legal Services , the General Manager be authorized to execute and deliver such documentation on behalf of the Board.*

BACKGROUND

Steam Engine 374 pulled the first transcontinental passenger train into Vancouver on May 23, 1887 completing Canada's dream of a coast to coast railway system. The Vancouver Central Lions Club, in co-operation with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, took on fundraising to build the \$400,000 glass pavilion that now houses Engine 374 today. The pavilion opened in 1997.

The Park Board, Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Society (Roundhouse Society) and 374 Station Society originally entered into an operating agreement dated December 17, 2003 (the "2003 Engine 374 Agreement") providing for the custodianship of the heritage railway locomotive Engine 374 owned by the Park Board. This was for the period commencing July 25, 2003 and expiring on July 24, 2006. During the term of the agreement, the 374 Station Society would provide volunteers to open the pavilion to show the engine to the public and display rail memorabilia.

However, due to the reduced number of volunteers available in the 374 Society, the 374 Society was unable to provide the level of service necessary to keep the pavilion open to the public seven days/week for viewing of the Engine and to perform all the services under the 2003 Engine 374 Agreement.

The West Coast Railway Association (WCRA) is a non-profit society and a registered Canadian charity that expressed an interest, willingness and capability to take over the performance of the custodial duties from the 374 Society and the Roundhouse Society has agreed that WCRA may do so on the terms and conditions of this agreement.

DISCUSSION

The West Coast Railway Association has been informally involved with operating the 374 Engine pavilion at the Roundhouse since the spring of 2006 and shares many members in common with the 374 Station Society. In fact, the 374 Station Society has now become a branch of the much larger WCRA organization.

The WCRA is dedicated to the preservation of British Columbia railway history. The WCRA was established as a non-profit organization in May 1961. It now operates the West Coast Rail Heritage Park in Squamish attracting 40,000 visitors per year. Its activities include the procurement and restoration of rail artifacts for public display, education regarding rail history, and other activities of interest to its members. It currently has 480 members and logged over 29,000 volunteer hours during 2006. A recent project was the restoration of the Royal Hudson 2860 steam locomotive which had its maiden excursion on April 15, 2007.

The Roundhouse Society is fully supportive of the new arrangement and sees many advantages to the new partnership. These include the ability to:

- have the engine accessible to the public seven days per week;
- organize more special events centering on the Engine including the annual celebration that marks the completion of the historic arrival of Engine 374 in Vancouver in 1887;
- offer other events and programs that celebrate the history of the Roundhouse and rail transportation in Vancouver and British Columbia and that incorporate arts and recreation programming.

The agreement outlines the responsibilities of WCRA regarding use of the pavilion for showing the engine to the public, the placement of historic artifacts (pictures and other memorabilia), the operation of a small souvenir kiosk, instruction as to how and when the Engine may be moved, insurance requirements, communications strategies, etc. The agreement is very similar to the previous agreement with the 374 Station Society, with the exception of the introduction of the ability to sell train/rail related souvenirs on a profit-sharing basis with the Roundhouse Society. It is expected that the sale of souvenirs will be modest but will contribute to enriching the experience of the public who come from all over the world to see the engine.

SUMMARY

Approval of this agreement will enable the Park Board, the Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Society, and the West Coast Rail Association to continue to provide public access to this important historical icon and to further expand programming to the public.

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