

Date: November 16, 2007



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: The Stanley Park 120th Anniversary Celebration

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve the following to celebrate the 120th anniversary of Stanley Park in 2008:

- *Mounting a display of 30-36 permanent interpretative panels throughout the park,*
- *Commissioning the Vancouver Museum to mount an historical exhibition, pending the confirmation of a donation to fund the exhibition.*

BACKGROUND

Stanley Park was established in 1888 and the Park Board itself was appointed in 1888 and became an elected body in 1890.

DISCUSSION

In honour of the upcoming 120th birthday of Stanley Park in 2008, staff recommend to use the idea of historical exhibitions about the park to celebrate this important milestone. The exhibitions would be an opportunity to celebrate not only the park but also the Park Board, whose birth and history are tied to the establishment of Vancouver's first and largest park.

The proposed exhibition projects will showcase both the natural and human history of the park. History has shaped the park as we know it today and will inform, in part, the development of a long term plan for the park's recovery from last year's storm. The report to the Board on the Restoration Plan identified the need to develop an education/interpretive legacy for the park as an important part of the restoration process.

The "Legacies" portion of the Restoration Plan would be directly supported by a series of 30 to 36 permanent interpretative panels showcasing important aspects of the park's history. These are proposed to be mounted throughout the park. Temporary signs would be placed on the panels referencing the historical exhibition at the Vancouver Museum and recognizing donor support for the exhibitions. Proposed funding for this project

would be provided through the contribution of \$100,000 by designated donors with the remainder of funds coming from the Stanley Park Restoration Fund.

The second exhibition proposed is comprised of a 3,600 square foot, curated exhibition created in partnership with and presented at the Vancouver Museum. It would run from September 2008 through February, 2009. The exhibition would include interpretative panels, displays of over 250 artifacts (such as Stanley Park souvenirs, First Nations objects, paintings, sporting equipment, trophies, maps, guide books and more) and over 100 historical photographs and images of the Park. It would also feature a “Stanley Park Home Movie” based on movies made by countless park visitors. The Museum is planning to widely promote this exhibition in both US and Canadian medias. The total costs of the exhibition are \$445,000. The Vancouver Museum requires funding from the Park Board of \$175,000, which is proposed to be raised from donations. The exhibition will be confirmed once contributions from the potential donors are secured.

The interpretative panels proposed for installation in the park echo the themes and displays of the museum exhibition. The similar themes and displays would provide a strong linkage between Stanley Park and the Vancouver Museum, thereby encouraging park visitors to attend the museum and vice versa.

SUMMARY

Stanley Park has a long, illustrious and, in many ways, remarkable history. It is the heart and soul of our city and valued as a national treasure by all who call themselves Canadian. The role that the Park Board and Stanley Park have played in our City’s history is substantive.

The devastating wind storm that struck the park in December and the public’s fervent and compassionate response to the devastation has only strengthened our confidence that such an exhibition would be well-received by the public and serve to reaffirm the park’s longevity and significance in our city’s and our country’s history.

Stanley Park has always been a popular destination for local residents and visitors from around the world, many of whom contact staff seeking more information about the events and history that have shaped the character of the park—and our City--over the last 120 years.

The permanent interpretation display in Stanley Park and the temporary exhibition about the history of Stanley Park would celebrate the park’s important historical milestone, add depth to visitors’ knowledge and understanding of the park’s past, and raise awareness of the important work of the Park Board.

Prepared by:
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