



Date: October 21, 2010

TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Special Event Permit – Celebration of Light 2011

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board approve the key elements of the Celebration of Light fireworks event as outlined in Appendix A, with all final arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

POLICY

Board approval is required for major annual events that contain significant changes from previous years, or are in variance with one or more Park Board bylaws.

BACKGROUND

The Celebration of Light fireworks event has occurred in English Bay for 20 years and is now one of the premier summer festivities, attracting over a million visitors each year. The City of Vancouver and Park Board are recognized supporters of this event, contributing resources in-kind relating to the intensive site preparation, sanitation services and other assistance.

Over the past number of years, organizers have cited increasing operating costs and challenges with achieving funding targets through sponsorships as factors that have repeatedly threatened this long-standing event. In 2010, the Fireworks Society hired brandLIVE to a three-year contract to enhance the overall event experience and address issues relating to financial sustainability, including sponsorship and other potential revenue opportunities.

DISCUSSION

In 2010, brandLIVE and Park Board staff began exploring ideas for improving the fireworks event by incorporating family-friendly entertainment and new amenities in locations outside of the primary English Bay location. This included performance stages, a “family-zone” at Vanier Park, and multiple bicycle valet kiosks to help reduce vehicular

traffic congestion. Overall these elements were well-received by visitors and brandLIVE is seeking to add further amenities starting in 2011 (Appendix A).

The most significant new activation planned for 2011, which the organizer would like approval for, is a reserved seating area in the park space just south of the English Bay Bathhouse building. The area would accommodate up to 1,000 people, using temporary fencing and a bleacher structure. Access will be controlled via a single point of entry with admission available by pre-purchased ticket only, coordinated through brandLIVE and available to the general public as well as sponsorship partners. The anticipated benefits of this activation include improved access to and organization of prime seating space, as well as an additional revenue stream to assist organizers with the costs of hosting the annual festival.

Staff have reviewed the preliminary plans for this reserved seating area and the balance of the site plan, as presented at the October 7 Board committee meeting, and recommend approval of the proposal for 2011. A post-event debrief will be completed in 2011 between staff and the organizers to determine whether any adjustments will be required for future events, based on feedback from residents, staff, and other stakeholders.

SUMMARY

Staff recommend that the Board approve the key concepts of the Celebration of Light fireworks event as outlined in Appendix A, with all final arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

Prepared by:

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Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
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Celebration of Light – Proposed 2011 Site Plan
Event Dates: July 30, August 3, August 6

