



Date: March 11, 2015

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
FROM: General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
SUBJECT: Connaught Park - Mereloma Club Lease Renewal

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## RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the renewal of the lease with the Mereloma Club at Connaught Park field house for a ten year period commencing June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.
- B. THAT the Board approve an application by the Vancouver Merelomas to the Liquor Control Board to obtain a Private Members liquor license.
- C. THAT once the form of the agreement has been approved by the General Manager and Director of Legal Services, that the General Manager be authorized to execute the document on behalf of the Board

## POLICY

The Board approves use of all lands under its jurisdiction

## BACKGROUND

The Mereloma Club is an amateur athletic organization founded in 1923 by Bill Edwards and eleven other swimmers from the Kitsalano area. Canadian Football, Rugby and various other sports soon followed. In 2013 the club celebrated its 90th anniversary. It has expanded to over 600 active members and eight amateur sport programs including Mini rugby, Men's and Women's rugby, soccer, softball and cricket. It continues to produce international players in these fields. In 2013 the Mereloma Masters Woman's' Soccer team won a gold medal in a tournament in Torino Italy and the Masters Woman's softball team won a silver medal at the same tournament. In order to support these various sporting programs the club books outdoor field space through the recreation department for all the Connaught fields as well as fields at Braemar, Trillium and Eric Hamber sporting fields

The Board has had a lease with the Mereloma Club for the Connaught Park field house since 1975. In 1979 the City of Vancouver awarded the Mereloma Club with a heritage award for preserving architectural integrity during renovations. The Merelomas maintain the building and with the Park Board's approval provide capital upgrades to the field house. Over the term of their most recent contract they spent over \$150,000 in capital upgrades and approximately \$30,000 per year on repairs and maintenance.

## DISCUSSION

The Vancouver Merelomas have expressed an interest in renewing their lease agreement with the Park Board for a further ten years under the same terms and conditions as their previous agreement. They are also seeking the approval of the Park Board to submit an application to the Liquor Control Board for a Private Members liquor license.

Historically, under their License agreement with the Park Board the Mereloma Club has been authorized to serve alcohol provided the club does not breach any of the policies of the Park Board, the City of Vancouver or the Liquor Control and Licensing Act. Currently to host an event the club has to apply for a Special Occasion's License through the Liquor Control Board in order to be able to serve alcohol for individual events they have throughout the year. Each time the club applies for a special occasion's license there is a cost for licensing fees. In addition at the end of each event all alcohol must be removed from the premise. When hosting events the club hires professional service companies who operate the bar using fully trained personnel with Serving It Right certification. In their history as a tenant at Connaught Park there have been no noise complaints or incidents resulting in the attendance of the Vancouver Police Department or a Liquor Inspector representing the Liquor Control Board.

If approved by the Liquor Control Board a Private Members license will allow the club to be licensed on an annual basis rather than an individual event basis. It will also allow them to retain alcohol on the premise between events. Their new license would allow them to serve alcohol to their private members or their invitees and not members of the general public. Their hours of operation will not change from their current practice of 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 5 p.m. to 12 a.m. on Friday, 11 a.m. to 12 a.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday. Any variance to these operating hours will require the prior written approval of the Park Board. They will continue to use professional liquor service companies to operate their bar during events who will provide fully trained personnel with Serving it Right certification. The Vancouver Rowing Club and the Brockton Pavilion Society are other organizations who operate with a Private Members license.

## SUMMARY

The Vancouver Merelomas have been a tenant at Connaught Park since 1975. They actively promote athletics in the fields of rugby, soccer, softball, and cricket. They have been good custodians of our facility, maintaining and where necessary upgrading the building.

Staff is recommending that the Board approve a ten year lease with the Mereloma Club for the use of the building at Connaught Park under the same terms and conditions of the previous agreement. Staff is also recommending that the Board approve of the Vancouver Merelomas to apply for a private members liquor license.

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