



June 3, 2016

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Celebration of Light Festival - Extension of Sunsetter Bistro Operating Hours at Sunset Beach Park

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation approve a 1.5 hour extension to the operating hours of the Sunsetter Bistro at Second Beach Park during the Celebration of Light Festival on July 23, July 27, and July 30, 2016.

POLICY

Park Board approval is required for special events not included in the annual Calendar of Major Special Events and/or that are in variance with one or more Park Board by-laws.

BACKGROUND

Vancouver's Celebration of Light is the largest offshore fireworks competition in the world and the City of Vancouver's largest event, attracting upwards of 400,000 spectators nightly to English Bay. Owned and operated by the not-for-profit Vancouver Fireworks Festival Society, the 2016 event marks the 26th consecutive year of the competition, which contributes over \$40 million annually in incremental tourism and hospitality spending.

The City of Vancouver and Park Board are long standing supporters of this event and contribute numerous in-kind resources, such as site preparation assistance, sanitation services and other civic amenities.

DISCUSSION

In 2015, the Park Board approved the introduction of a 750-person licensed area at Sunset Beach Park known as the Sunsetter Bistro. This activation operated from 2:00pm to 7:30pm (with last call at 7:00pm). This all-ages experience provided an affordable opportunity for the public to gather as a community and enjoy entertainment and activities including the LG104.3 main stage, food and beverage services, and various sponsorship activations. Additional amenities included picnic tables, children's area, washrooms (with accessible facilities) and cultural programming (featuring unplugged performances on a smaller secondary stage). The Bistro was actively promoted as a free cultural, family-friendly, food and entertainment focused site where licensed beverage sales were secondary to the guest experience.

While the Bistro activation was well executed, attendance was low during the primary afternoon operating hours. In fact, overall attendance, atmosphere, and food and beverage sales did not reach meaningful levels until approximately 7:00pm (the time of last call).

Feedback from bistro participants, many of whom arrived after work hours, also indicated disappointment with the early closure time.

To address the customer satisfaction and economic viability issues, the Vancouver Fireworks Festival Society is proposing to extend the operating hours of the Sunsetter Bistro by 1.5-hours until 9:00pm (with last call at 8:30pm). The extension will better align with customer behaviour/preferences and improve the Society's ability to recover the costs associated with the activation through increased food and beverage sales. In 2015, the Sunsetter Bistro posted negative financial results.

Park Board staff have carefully considered the application and are confident that the initiative can be delivered successfully with little or no negative impacts to other stakeholders. The application for the Special Occasion License to support the Bistro's extended operating hours has also been reviewed and conditionally approved by the VPD, VF&RS, and BC Liquor Control & Licencing Branch.

SUMMARY

The Celebration of Light fireworks festival is a designated civic event that activates public spaces and enhances the vibrancy of our city. The event offers residents and visitors an exciting opportunity to gather and watch one of the world's leading fireworks displays. The request from the organizer represents an attempt to incrementally build on successful programming and activations of recent years. Accordingly, staff recommend that the Board approve the request from the organizer as outlined above.

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