



Exhibition Place

15

November 14, 2015

To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place

FOR INFORMATION

From: Dianne Young, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: **BMO Field Phase 2 – Coronation Park**

Summary:

This report provides an update on the request of the National Home Show for Exhibition Place staff to explore with City Parks Forestry & Recreation, in consultation with the local City Councillor (Councillor Cressy) the use of Coronation Park for parking during the 2016 National Home Show.

Financial Impact:

There are no financial implications from this report.

Decision History:

The Exhibition Place 2014 – 2016 Strategic Plan had a Business Development Goal *to actively support the expansion and enhancement of entertainment facilities* and as a Strategy to support this Goal *we will continue to analyze and explore expansion opportunities for BMO Field including improvements related to Festival Plaza.*

At its meeting of March 6, 2014 the Board approved of entering into the Letter of Intent (LOI) between the Board, City and MLSE for the improvements to BMO Field to include an addition of 10,000 seating, stadium amenities, a roof deck over all seating areas and improvements to allow for the CFL to play at BMO Field which LOI was approved by City Council at its meeting of June 10, 11, 12 and 13, 2014. The LOI was subsequently amended by City Council at its meeting of August 25, 2014.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.MM52.28>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.PG35.8>

At its meeting of September 4, 2015, the Board approved of an updated schedule and construction areas for the Phase 2 BMO Field improvements provided that MLSE agrees to address the construction issues raised, including negotiating and entering into appropriate agreements with the Board.

At its meeting of October 23 2015, the Board adopted several recommendations related to the Phase 2 BMO Field construction as follows:

1. Approve of the recommended expenditures and proposed financing of these expenditures as detailed in the Confidential Attachment I to this report;
2. Following approval, release the information related to the expenditure impact on the 2016 Operating Budget to City Financial Planning Department;
3. Direct Exhibition Place staff, at the request of the National Home Show, to explore with City PF&R the use of Coronation Park for parking during the 2016 National Home Show, in consultation with the local City Councillor (Councillor Cressy) and that staff report back to the November 20, 2015 meeting of the Board;

4. Direct Exhibition Place staff to continue to meet with each show producer to refine the prepared individualized traffic and transportation management plan to replace the temporary loss of 1441 parking spaces as a result of the BMO Field Phase 2 expansion;
5. Direct Exhibition Place staff to establish a defined protocol for communication with major show tenants and, where possible, to allow time for consideration and response on matters affecting the major tenants before such matters are presented to the Board of Governors; and;
6. Direct staff to report back to the Board at its meeting in June 2016 to address the question of a compensation plan for only those major shows affected by the Phase 2 construction.

Issue Background:

This report outlines the outcome of the consultations held with City Parks, Forestry & Recreation (PF&R) and Councillor Cressy regarding the use of Coronation Park for parking during the 2016 National Home Show.

Comments

Exhibition Place staff met with Councillor Cressy, Mr. Romoff, General Manager, City PF&R and Mr. Ubbens, Director.

Coronation Park is just east of Exhibition Place and south of Lakeshore Boulevard. Approximately 50% of the park is heavily treed and the other 50% has three Class A baseball diamonds and clubhouse building with change rooms.

In 2013, the City engaged DTAH Consultants to develop a Heritage Restoration Masterplan for Coronation Park which will be implemented in 2016 with a full heritage restoration including tree management, restoration of the original commemorative pathways and interpretive signage. The park and its trees have significant historical value, based on the following rationale:

- The park was designed in 1930's by a Coronation Park Advisory Committee, which included Thomas Hobbs, Andrew Gillespie (Toronto Ex-Serviceman's Coronation Committee) and F.E. Robinson of the Toronto Chapter of Men of the Trees. The park was designed as a commemorative landscape for the veterans of World War I and each tree south of Remembrance Drive represents a unit of the Expeditionary Forces. At the centre of the park design is the King's Oak, surrounded by trees representing the dominions and colonies of the British Empire. Coronation Park is one of the few remaining landscapes in Toronto designed as a living memorial and one of the few designed and built by the Toronto Chapter of Men of the Trees.
- 144 commemorative trees in total were planted in 1937. In 1939, for the occasion of the Toronto visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, another 123 trees were planted along Remembrance Drive. During the Royal Visit, each tree was planted by a veteran and a student representative from each school in Toronto.
- In 2016, to mark the Centennial of various milestones throughout World War I, events will be attended by veterans, military personnel, and the general public. The overall park must be kept in good condition and maintained in a manner suitable for these events.

The baseball diamonds were upgraded to Class A status several years ago and given their location within a very dense neighbourhood in downtown Toronto they are extremely busy throughout the summer permit season which commences May 1st. Not only were the diamonds themselves upgraded but the outfields have an active sprinkler system to irrigate the grass.

PF&R staff also confirmed that permitting parking for Exhibition Place in an area not designated for parking would be in contravention of City By-law 608-27(a).

At the meeting, Exhibition Place staff proposed that the only areas of Coronation Park to be used for parking would be the baseball diamonds area and would be used for approximately 5 days of the National Home Show happening between March 11-20, 2016. On these 5 days existing available parking lots at Exhibition Place and the surrounding neighbourhood would not satisfy demand and this temporary lot would only be used as a last resort when all other spaces were filled. Staff estimated that this area in Coronation Park would result in potentially 250 parking spaces. For access / egress to this parking area, Exhibition Place would need to claim approximately 20 street parking spots on Remembrance Drive from the Toronto Parking Authority. Exhibition Place proposed to pay for all set-up and reparation costs of the lands.

At the meeting, Councillor Cressy and City PF&R expressed serious concerns about the Exhibition Place proposal for the following reasons:

- In principle, Councillor Cressy, City PF&R staff and City Council have all taken a position against the use of parkland for parking;
- Parking in Coronation would destroy sod, sport fields, irrigation systems and compact soil around heritage tree roots;
- The dates requested for parking coincide with the spring thaw, when turf is most vulnerable to damage from vehicles;
- If the sod is damaged, resodding could not happen until the end of April/early May, requires about 4 weeks to knit for playability (depending on weather and temperatures) all which could take approximately 6 to 8 weeks delaying permitting on the baseball fields from May 1st to July; and
- Cost for resodding each field would be from \$40,000 to \$50,000 to repair, with a possible total cost of \$120,000 to \$150,000.

While Councillor Cressy expressed his overall support for Exhibition Place, he indicated he could not support the use of Coronation Park for parking. However, his office is working with Exhibition Place staff to try and locate other potential areas for parking in the immediate area including revisiting use of the vacant lot on Bathurst Street. Exhibition Place will continue to work with the Home Show for other locations on the grounds including under the Gardiner (as recommended by the parking consultant) although this is somewhat dependent on the Gardiner deck restorations.

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