

2000 November 16

TO: CITY MANAGER
FROM: DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES
SUBJECT: WINTER WONDERLAND AT KENSINGTON ARENA
PURPOSE: To respond to Ms. Dawne Bringland's letter regarding changes to the Winter Wonderland program at Kensington Arena.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. THAT this report be received for information purposes.

REPORT

At its meeting of 2000 November 15, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission received the attached report and adopted the two recommendations contained therein.



Kate Friars
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION
AND CULTURAL SERVICES

tc
Attachment
d:\data\council reports\PK-WINTER WONDERLAND AT KENSINGTON ARENA

SUBJECT: WINTER WONDERLAND AT KENSINGTON ARENA

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to Council for information.
2. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to Ms. Dawne Bringeland.

REPORT

Appearing as correspondence on the 2000 October 04 Commission Agenda is a letter from Ms. Dawne Bringeland which was referred to Commission from Council. The letter is in regard to changes to the Winter Wonderland program at Kensington Arena (Attachment #1). This report will provide background information on the planned changes to the program and the rationale behind implementing these changes.

BACKGROUND

Winter Wonderland is a holiday skate program that began in 1987. For the three weeks leading up to New Year's Eve, Kensington Arena has been reserved exclusively for a number of private functions, school skates and public skating opportunities. Each year staff are required to review and assess the types of programs and services offered in facilities. In the case of Winter Wonderland, a number of issues were identified concerning the continued operation of the program in its current form.

Winter Wonderland requires an extensive set up which includes the construction of an island on the actual ice surface. Due to the large amount and complex nature of the decorations and the ongoing use of the change rooms and lobby area, the cost of providing Winter Wonderland has escalated substantially over the years. Although there continued to be a number of corporate clients that contributed to supporting the program's cost, there has also been a substantial increase in the overall cost to run the program, with a decrease in the amount of revenue generated. Staff have also noted a corresponding increase in demand for ice time from a variety of community sports groups but have been unable to respond due to the set-up requirements of Winter Wonderland.

PROGRAM CHANGES

After careful review of the 1999 Winter Wonderland schedule and in consideration of additional requests for ice time from a variety of sport groups during the holiday season, staff remain committed to delivering a festive holiday skate program that can meet the diverse needs of the community.

In order to facilitate mixed use of the arena floor, the ice surface elements (trees and figures) will be removed. This will allow for hockey, figure skating and ringette to schedule holiday events and tournaments for their participants. Skate time has also been reserved for corporate and school skating events although additional services such as crafts, face painting and Santa's workshop will only be available on a cost recovery basis. Additional ice time has been reserved for public skating throughout the school break. With the exception of the actual ice surface and the rink glass and boards, existing Winter Wonderland props will be used to decorate the facility.

Past users of Winter Wonderland have been contacted and informed of the changes. To date, a number of bookings have already been received from a variety of sports groups, schools and community groups. It is anticipated that the revised schedule will not only increase the usage of the arena and thereby meet community need, but will also reduce or eliminate the financial loss. The status of the New Years Eve celebration is currently on hold pending the outcomes of the overall changes to the program.

Staff will continue to monitor modifications to Winter Wonderland and will evaluate if any further changes need to take place in future years.

JR:mc

Attachment

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R33

COMMISSION AGENDA
DATE: 00/10/04
CORRESPONDENCE: (a)

CITY OF BURNABY INTER OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
PARKS, RECREATION AND
CULTURE COMMISSION

DATE: 2000 SEPTEMBER 13

FROM: DEPUTY CITY CLERK

SUBJECT: WINTER WONDERLAND AND NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION ON ICE
(CORRESPONDENCE ITEM 3 (F) - COUNCIL MEETING SEPTEMBER
11, 2000)

Council, at the Open Council meeting held on 2000 September 11 received the attached correspondence from Ms. Dawne Bringeland commenting on the discontinuation of the subject two programs.

Arising from consideration of the correspondence, Council **REFERRED** the letter to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission for consideration at its next meeting.

A REPORT ON THIS SUBJECT WILL BE SUBMITTED AT A FUTURE MEETING

Maryann Manuel
DEPUTY CITY CLERK

MM/rt

Copy: Deputy City Manager Corporate Labour Relations
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

RECEIVED
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

SEP 15 2000

Refer To Initials
DD
CC:JR
[Handwritten initials]

Dawne Bringeland, MBA
10-2980 Mariner Way, Coquitlam V3C 4K1
Ph: 945-0800 Fax: 945-0877 email: dbringel@bcit.ca

~~CORRESPONDENCE~~
~~2000 SEPTEMBER 11~~

August 23, 2000

Mayor Drummond & Council
City of Burnaby
4949 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V5G 1M2

Faxed: 294-7724

**Re: Winter Wonderland (originally known as Christmas On Ice)
& New Year's Eve Celebration on Ice**

I recently heard that the Winter Wonderland (Christmas On Ice) event held each December since 1987 is being reviewed with the thought of cancelling it this year. As a result, I am writing this letter from 2 perspectives; 1. as the originator of the program, 2. as a representative of Beckland Equipment (a corporate customer) who has rented ice time at prime rates each year since 1992 during the event.

Background

Winter Wonderland or Christmas On Ice as it was originally named, was started in 1987. I was the Program Coordinator for the arenas and saw a need for an upgraded program that invited the community to experience a winter wonderland that celebrated the winter solstice and holiday season. I developed the program to include not only a magical ice experience but as well, crafts, displays and activities that the whole family could participate in. By year 4, the event was managed by a high performing team consisting of a variety of staff from a multitude of positions within the arenas.

The event attracted corporate customers who 'hired' us as coordinators for their children's Christmas parties. We coordinated all the details and charged full rates for the experience. Two of our largest corporate customers were Chevron Canada and our union, CUPE. Both groups had around 1000 guests attend the parties we coordinated for them. Each subsequent year saw repeat customers and a customer base that grew so quickly that by year 2 there was a waiting list of potential customers for the corporate party times. I was also able to secure corporate sponsorship from MacDonald's, Chevron, and Curtis Lumber.

The program also provided an exceptionally special experience for schools in the area: schools booked ice times during school hours. The program was very special for children who may not otherwise have been able to come to the arena. Children made repeat visits bringing their families during the public skate sessions. Schools booked each year of the 4 years I managed the program.

: COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DEP. MGR. - CORP. LAB. REL.
- DIRECTOR FINANCE
- DIR. PARKS, REC. & CULT.
SERV.

Note

It is suggested that this matter be referred to the Parks and Recreation Commission for its consideration.

The public skates themselves attracted numbers far above the normal attendance figures for public skating sessions and enjoyed repeat customers during the course of the week. We attracted people from as far away as Abbotsford and throughout the Greater Vancouver Regional District. As staff, we received numerous letters from customers thanking us for the program and encouraging us to continue the following year.

I have heard that the reason for cutting the program is budget. What is interesting is that right from the first year of the program there was a positive revenue stream covering all costs plus. In year 1 we enjoyed a positive revenue contribution of \$1200 over and above costs. This figure increased each year and by year 4 the revenue contribution was \$38,000 with costs of \$24,000 leaving a net revenue contribution of \$14,000. My gut tells me that there should still be a positive revenue stream if all business systems have been managed effectively and efficiently.

Notwithstanding the revenue contribution is the number of citizens who attended the program - by year 4 there was between 10,600 & 11,000 people who attended the event over a 10 day period, an average of 1100 people per day!

At the same time that I implemented Christmas On Ice, I started the New Year's Eve Celebration on Ice. Another program that I understand is under the knife. I recall my boss at the time asking me what my definition of success was for the new year's eve program and my response was that if we had 50 participants I would consider it a success. Well, much to my surprise and delight we had over 200. My last New Year's Eve program was 1991 entering into 1992 - the City kicked off it's centennial celebrations at the arena with then Mayor Copeland and Council cutting cake, releasing balloons etc. Attendance on the night was well over 600. We had a line-up of people for over 45 minutes waiting to get in.

While I cannot comment on both programs' level of success since 1991 (my last year) what I can say is that my impression is that the programs have continued to grow. If this is not the case then a business review is necessary, but I would wonder then why they had not continued to grow given their uniqueness in the lower mainland as well as their popularity. Current trends towards people participating in special events particularly those geared to families is even stronger today than it was when the programs were started!

Beckland Equipment

Beckland Equipment is a Burnaby based company who has rented ice time during Winter Wonderland since 1992. The company has thoroughly enjoyed the event each year and through the event has collected a substantial amount of food for the Food Bank from it's guests. The company would be very disappointed and at a loss if the event was cancelled due to the 'tradition' it has become for those attending. Like other corporate customers, Beckland Equipment pays full rental rates and purchases extra services provided by the program.

Due to the nature of corporate party planning, if Winter Wonderland is going to be cancelled, corporate customers should be advised asap as planning, booking etc. is usually done 6-12 months in advance of the actual event. In fact, in the earlier years of Winter Wonderland, corporate customers were rebooked on a first right of refusal basis for the following year so in essence they had a spot secured a year in advance subject to minor adjustments based on the calendar. This process was designed based on corporate customer feedback and the planning processes they had in place for their social committees.

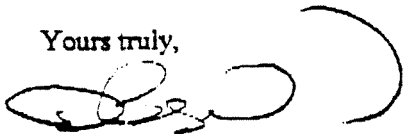
Summary

My goal here is to ensure that the history of the programs are known and to encourage a full and proper business review of the programs prior to any final decisions made regarding their status. It is my opinion, under the assumption that the management of the programs has continued to be proactive and successful throughout the years, and the current trends around special events continues to grow, that the programs should remain intact. If the programs have declined over the years, I would encourage a business review to determine the reasons why and if in fact, adjustments to the program are what are needed versus cancellation. This is based on the premise that special event trends have continued to grow with fervor over the years and so it stands to reason that events of this nature, subject to fine-tuning each year, should enjoy many, many years of operation.

As an employee of 25 years with the city (1973-1998), it is my opinion that too many programs have come under the budget cutting knife without a thorough analysis of what they contribute to the city in terms of meeting citizens needs etc.. There are many creative ways to secure a zero tax increase through process improvements, service delivery and by inviting staff to actively participate in creating an excellent yet efficient workplace. Innovation in service delivery throughout the city has not been actively supported or pursued and highly qualified staff are not utilized to their fullest extent which can make for a deflated workforce.

I close with the hopes that as Mayor and Council you carefully consider the contributions these 2 programs have made over the last 13 years and could likely continue to make in the future given the right business environment and perhaps fine-tuning if necessary. It can be far to easy to cut a high-profile program that appears on the surface to cost alot of money but at the expense of other attributes and contributions they have made to the overall department and community.

Yours truly,



Dawne Bringeland

