

March 23, 2021: Motion 1 Re: Commercial Enterprises in City Parks

WHEREAS the Glebe has less than half the per capita park land the city reserves and provides for new communities; and

WHEREAS land prices and city policies make acquisition of additional park land in the Glebe virtually impossible even while those same policies increase population density and further reduce community per capita park area as well as the proportion of households with access to their own private green space; and

WHEREAS the Glebe Community Association (GCA) Parks Committee, recognizing the stress-reducing, restorative health benefit of the natural environment that parks and greenspace provide, is committed to the maintenance, preservation, and vitality of this scarce and much-loved natural resource for the community; and

WHEREAS the GCA Parks Committee considers the preservation of the natural, healthy, safe, open, environmentally-friendly, passive and active recreational qualities of the Glebe's parks and other greenspaces a first principle above all other considerations, including other approaches that might be attempted to permanently or seasonally "animate" these spaces in other ways; and

WHEREAS existing Glebe parks are already intensively used, creatively 'animated' and enjoyed by the public at large, including a wide demographic range; and

WHEREAS the Glebe is already the home to Lansdowne Park, a City operated 'regional' park with a mix of grassed open land, trees, garden, picnic tables and active play features for climbing, skating, ball sport, skateboards and which has ample adjacent, permanent commercial enterprises should park users seek such facilities near a park; and

WHEREAS the GCA Parks Committee supports the presence in Glebe parks of traditional, fleeting commercial enterprises such as an art festival or pop-up theatrical performance which have no long-term impact on Glebe park access or landscape; and

WHEREAS the GCA Parks Committee, treasuring the naturalized green park spaces in the Glebe, sees no merit in permanently or even seasonally losing any portion of our City-owned parks to commercial activity, as these threaten to: disrupt the natural atmosphere of these parks with paving/gravelling of greenspace surfaces or other required infrastructure/installation, possible noise, intrusive smells, pollutants, and other related activities; and to potentially impact designated heritage property; and

WHEREAS the GCA Park Committee is concerned that NCC plans to establish a multi-month seasonal bistro at the east end of the NCC-owned Patterson Creek Park, converting the area from public- to private-access, hardscaping a previously grassed area, and possibly causing problems associated with eateries including increased garbage or noise, and potentially serving as a precedent for other parks in the Glebe; and

WHEREAS the NCC's process of consultation with the community, including both immediate residents and the GCA, occurred after the fact and was felt by some to be insufficient;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GCA works to ensure that any decision by the City to propose any changes to the use of Glebe parks first require meaningful consultation with the community including the GCA and that relevant baseline data be collected in advance, and that terms of any pilot project include an evaluation strategy, evaluation criteria, data collection and decision criteria; AND

if any proposed intervention is within or bordering on a Heritage Conservation District or involves a recognized federal built heritage property, consultations should include City and/or Federal heritage professionals as and when appropriate.