Agenda - Executive Policy Committee – March 20, 2008

OPERATING BUDGET REVIEW

Item No. 8 Festival du Voyageur - Request for Additional Funding
File FE(2008)

The Festival du Voyageur has requested that additional funding in the amount of $10,000.00 be considered during the 2008 Operating Budget Review Process and that the annual operating grant be increased from $40,000.00 to $50,000.00 for the construction, maintenance and operation of the River Trail.

FESTIVAL DU VOYAGEUR INC.

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October 19th, 2007

Mr. Bryan Gray
Manager
Executive Policy Secretariat
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

SUBJECT: River Trail 2008

Mr. Gray,

Festival du Voyageur is in the process of finalizing the 2008 program details related to the launch of the Assiniboine Credit Union River Trail. We would like to request the payment of the City of Winnipeg's contribution for the management of the project on behalf of the City of Winnipeg prior to January 4th, 2008.

In the past several years, the City has contributed an amount of $40,000. We would like to ask the City to review its' contribution for 2008. Festival du Voyageur, in collaboration with several partners, has developed key activities that make the River Trail a winter activity like no other. The River Trail will be held from January 11th to February 17th. The activities on the River Trail will conclude with a major sporting event that has the potential to attract hundreds of new visitors to our great city.

As you may have heard, Festival du Voyageur, in collaboration with Drive Marketing, will be hosting the Canadian Pond Hockey Championships – Western Regionals from February 21st-24th, 2008 on the Red River. Twelve rinks will be created in order to host between 80 and 100 teams for the first ever regional championship which will see 500 people coming to Winnipeg to participate in this great sporting event. Also, Festival du Voyageur has been working with Ugly Duckling Productions to produce the activities that will be held on the River Trail this year. By creating anchor events such as the Regional Championship, we are in need of additional resources to insure the quality of the events throughout the duration of the River Trail. Therefore, the Festival du Voyageur would request a contribution of $50,000 from the City of Winnipeg for the 2008 Assiniboine Credit Union River Trail.

As you may know, the Assiniboine Credit Union River Trail has been a Winnipeg winter tradition for over 17 years. Managed by Festival du Voyageur inc. in partnership with The Forks, it is our city's most comprehensive destination for winter leisure activities. For centuries people have been gathering on the rivers to travel, trade and among other things, play. All Winnipeggers and visitors can enjoy a wonderful variety of winter activities on 4 km's of Winnipeg's famous waterways. Skating, cycling, snow shoeing, walking or enjoying a sleigh ride are all some of the many participative activities that we help to bring to life during our winter months. There are 7 access points to the trail linking a number of Winnipeg neighbourhoods: St. Boniface Cathedral in the French Quarter, The Forks Marina, Louis Riel Park (behind the Legislative Building), Norwood Grove (North of Norwood Bridge), Osborne Village, Hugo Street Dock and Spence Street.

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The 2007 Assiniboine Credit Union River Trail was a great success with many new initiatives! The addition of the mini replicas of fur trading forts along access points provided the public a place to meet, hear stories, and get information about upcoming winter events. Bannock cooked over a fire and hot chocolate added to the unique atmosphere. For 2006, the mild weather played a part in attracting a lot of people to the trail, and was a great challenge for the operational staff because of the record-setting warm temperatures. We are proud of what was achieved this year, despite the ice conditions and difficulties this presented.

The goals set out by the Assiniboine Credit Union River Trail – to encourage active living and participation in winter activities -- were met with great success. Created for all Winnipeggers and visitors to enjoy, this community event helped build a winter playground unique to our area.

2007 Highlights:

- Kick off of the Assiniboine Credit Union River Trail during the New Year's Eve Celebrations.
- Snow Sculpting workshops offered on the Trail.
- Anchor events: Ironman Bonspiel, CJP Boot Hockey Tournament, Icebike, RiverPond Classic Shinny Hockey Tourney, and the Routes on the Red Voyageur Sled Dog Races.
- Basic program changes; storytelling, interpretation, bannock and hot chocolate in the mini-forts, face painting, etc.
- Use of the Assiniboine Credit Union as a promotional tool for the Festival du Voyageur.

Upcoming for 2008, Festival du Voyageur is working on adding new elements of programming such as the Torchlight skate every Friday evening, Igloo Building Competition on the Red River and the Canadian National Pond Hockey Championships Western Regionals to name a few. Moreover, we are working closely with the Forks and other partners to look at ways we can enhance the offerings related to winter experience on our rivers and at the Forks site. We will keep you posted on major developments as we start to build for 2009.

To remind you, there has always been an issue in terms of the payment schedule due to the fact that the City's operational budget is usually passed in March of the following year, while the Festival commences its work well in advance during the fall and winter months. Furthermore, as the winter Festival approaches, our organization's cash flow becomes challenging leading up to February with all the contractual support we carry to help organize the winter event. This is why we look to the City for an advance so that we don't have to carry the costs of the River Trail management through to spring.

The City Clerk's Department issues the funds associated to the River Trail. In the past, the City has been able to accommodate the Festival by advancing the funds so that we can respect our contractual obligations associated with creating the RiverTrail. We are hoping that we can count on the advanced funding again.

Should you require additional information or have any questions, feel free to contact me at 781-6652.

Sincerely,

Josée Vaillancourt
Executive Director

CC Richard Kachur, City Clerk
Daniel Vandal, St-Boniface Councillor