Winnipeg Santa Claus PARADE

Saturday, November 12, 2011
Santa's Block Parties 4 p.m.
Parade Start 5 p.m.
Entertainment/Fireworks at The Forks 7 p.m.
www.WinnipegSantaParade.com

P.O. Box 61056, Grant Park
Winnipeg, Mb. R3M 3X8
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March 7, 2011

His Worship Mayor Sam Katz
c/o Richard Kachur, City Clerk
City of Winnipeg
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1B9

Re: One-Time $10,000 Grant To Enact Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade Vision Statement Recommendations

Dear Mayor Katz,

Please accept this letter as our submission to the 2011 budget process of our request for a one-time grant of $10,000 from the City of Winnipeg to help further enact the "Vision Statement" recommendations for the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade.

The "Vision Statement" recommendations for the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade were developed in the report "The Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade Report: Moving Forward The Next 100 Years". The City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Hydro, JCI Winnipeg and the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ were partners in commissioning this report delivered March 17, 2010.

The "Vision Statement" recommended in part:
"That the four Parade Report partners endorse and support a strategy to enlarge the vision of the Parade to include year-round activities and further develop a unique Parade character" (8.01) and
"That expanded community involvement become a vital component of all aspects of the Parade ...as a means of increasing citizenship buy-in and support for the event" (8.02).

The Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade is moving forward towards the goal of becoming a year round operation that is widely community based and financially sustainable. The Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade Advisory Committee is presently reviewing the Parade's mandate, corporate structure, by-laws and possible charity status and has already implemented a number of Report recommendations.

On-time bridge financing of $25,000 is needed over the next year to allow the Parade to fully develop and achieve its vision for a year-round operation with long term financial sustainability. The Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade has received a commitment of $15,000 from Manitoba Hydro towards the bridge financing leaving support of $10,000 to be secured.

The Parade is requesting a one-time $10,000 contribution from the City of Winnipeg to achieve its bridge financing objective. The City's contribution will allow the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade to successfully move towards its goal of continuing to be one of the most successful community events in downtown Winnipeg while developing long-term financial sustainability.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Ron Mark
Ron Mark
Executive Director
Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade

THE WINNIPEG SANTA CLAUS PARADE PRESENTATION

City of Winnipeg, Executive Policy Committee
Monday, March 14, 2011

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present. It is a pleasure to be here with you today. First, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Ron Mark. I am honoured to have been the Parade Manager of the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade for the past two years and am looking forward to continuing to direct the Parade again this year as Executive Director.

I want to talk to you about a community event that is extremely important to Winnipeggers.

November 2010 marked the start of the second century of the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade bringing Santa's magic of the season to children and the young-at-heart in downtown Winnipeg.

The first hundred years have seen the development of a proud and strongly supported Parade tradition, which the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ describes as "the most important event of the year".

Winnipeg got its first Eaton's Santa Claus Parade on Saturday, December 2, 1909. Every year since the Winnipeg Parade has evolved successfully to help reflect the City's festive and cultural makeup.

In 1966, the "Eaton's" Santa Claus Parade made its final journey through the streets of Winnipeg. The Red River Exhibition, Sever Signs, Winnipeg Firefighters Club and later the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, stepped up to the plate and took over the Parade from 1967 to 1975.

In 1976, a few years after the birth of "Unicity" in 1972, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, now JCI Winnipeg, assumed the stewardship of the Parade, a role they have proudly continued to this day.

After Winnipeg hosted a successful Grey Cup and accompanying parade in 1998, Manitoba Hydro sponsored an annual nighttime parade in the downtown until 2003: the *Power Smart Festival of Lights Parade.*

In 2004 and 2005 Manitoba Hydro and JCI Winnipeg joined forces to produce the *Power Smart / JCI Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade.* When the Grey Cup returned to Winnipeg in 2006, the Santa Clause Parade became part of the Grey Cup Parade organized by the Grey Cup Festival Committee. After 2006, JCI Winnipeg and Manitoba Hydro continued the *Power Smart / JCI Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade* to 2010.

Under the direction of an Advisory Committee including members from the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Hydro, Downtown Winnipeg BIZ and JCI Winnipeg, preparations

are currently underway to see the Parade's stewardship transfer from JCI Winnipeg to a larger community based board of directors.

We are not the largest parade. There are many others like Macy's, the Rose Bowl and Toronto parades. However, we are the second longest-running children's parade (after Toronto's Santa Claus Parade) in North America and are the largest nighttime-lit Santa Claus Parade in Canada. There is great history in the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade. In fact, I believe we have become iconic in the hearts of Winnipeggers.

The past two years have seen record crowds and the Parade has grown to just over a 100 entries.

Indeed, this diverse and strong attendance, clearly demonstrates that the Parade's support and appeal encompasses generations. The Parade provides a rare experience for a free outing, open to all, to be shared by families who have grown up in Winnipeg and to introduce new comers and immigrants alike to an important cultural event in their new city.

With the support of the City of Winnipeg, title sponsor Manitoba Hydro, other corporate sponsors and entry fees, the Parade presently operates on a "hard dollar" income of just over $115,000. In-kind donations more than match this figure at over $150,000 and volunteer numbers of close to 600 add an invaluable additional asset to the Parade. With this level of revenue, an active Advisory Committee and tightly controlled spending in all budget categories, we have produced a balanced budget parade the last two years of operation.

All four of the present stakeholders are dedicated to a successful Parade.

The City is committed to working towards a well run Parade that attracts people from all corners of the City to the downtown to enjoy an exciting and safe event.

Manitoba Hydro strives to be a vital part of the communities it serves in the city of Winnipeg and throughout the province. It views the support of the Parade as an important aspect of this mandate.

The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ remains committed to supporting the Parade and to investigating new ways of encouraging creative marketing and promotional opportunities for its downtown Winnipeg members.

JCI Winnipeg has successfully maintained the stewardship of the Santa Claus Parade for the past 35 years. The organization is firmly committed to ensuring that the Santa Claus Parade continues, for at least another 100 years.

In the past, the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade has focused on being a fantastic one-day event in the heart of downtown Winnipeg. However, we believe that the Parade can be so much more!

The envisioned goal for the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade is to develop the organization into a year-round festival orientated enterprise with the aim of making it the best nighttime-lit children's parade in Canada.

The report "The Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade Report: Moving Forward The Next 100 Years" was commissioned by The City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Hydro, JCI Winnipeg and the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ and was delivered in March 2010.

The "Vision Statement" of the Report recommends in part:
"That the four Parade Report partners endorse and support a strategy to enlarge the vision of the Parade to include year-round activities and further develop a unique Parade character" (8.01) and
"That expanded community involvement become a vital component of all aspects of the Parade ...as a means of increasing citizenship buy-in and support for the event" (8.02).

Many other specific recommendations that will help make the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade organization a real resource for the City are detailed in the Report.

The present Advisory Committee has developed a viable strategy and action plan to help deliver a year-round Parade presence that strengthens the Parade while moving towards becoming financially self-sufficient.

As with any dream, a strong team and sound financial resources are needed to turn it into a reality.

With respect, we are asking the City of Winnipeg through the Executive Policy Committee, to help us set the stage to meet our long-term goals by providing a one-time contribution of $10,000 to our bridge financing needs.

Total interim financing of $25,000 is needed to bridge operations while the organization transitions from an event only focus to year-round operations. The interim operations include working out of a downtown office space, administrative support and activities related directly to creating a mainly volunteer, community-based organization.

Manitoba Hydro has already committed to contributing $15,000 towards the bridge financing leaving this one time "ask" of $10,000 from the City of Winnipeg.

Short-term actions already underway include identifying subsidized downtown office space from McNaught Motors and an administrative assistant.

The other major component of the action plan, to apply for charity status with Canada Revenue Agency, is moving forward. A new community based organization is being developed with appropriate by-laws and governance procedures to be eligible for Canada Revenue Agency charity status. Once charity status has been established, the Winnipeg Parade committee can approach appropriate organizations to help deliver new avenues of operational and programming funding to assure stable organizational sustainability.

It is estimated that additional operating revenue of approximately $80,000 to $100,000 will be needed to supplement the present activities in the move to a year-round operation.

The actual Parade operations will continue to be financed as in the past and no bridge financing will be used to supplant Parade operations revenue. The bridge financing activities will continue to March 31, 2012, the expected timeframe to have the Parade's charity status in place.

Expanded activities for a year-round Parade organization include:

- having the Parade help kick-off an exciting season of winter programming in the City's downtown.
- strengthening the actual Parade, by providing float building workshops, costume production and sponsorships;
- deepening the community relationship, with hospital visits and community group involvement in the *Host A Block For Santa* program and
- ensuring that Winnipeg captures the title of the "Parade Capital of Canada". This initiative might include hosting a national Parade Conference & Expo, supporting a Christmas in August event, and expanding the television coverage of the Parade.

By promoting Winnipeg and Manitoba as the Parade capital of Canada and developing the necessary and appropriate infrastructure, the Parade also has the opportunity to be a real resource by supporting and strengthening existing parades in the province.

Winnipeg has a wealth of organizations and individuals with local, national and international experience in special event production and management. The creation of an advisory committee to have input into all aspects of the Parade could capitalize on these community assets.

I have reviewed the history, the present situation, the need for bridge financing and some vision for the Parade to illustrate the importance of the Parade to Winnipeggers. And secondly, to rekindle your spirit, to encourage you to remember when you were young, because I would bet that each of you, having visited the Parade, would have strong and positive memories. We are told that every year grandparents and parents bring their children back to the same spot that they enjoyed watching the Parade from. That is the richness of the history of something that is unique to Winnipeg.

Most importantly, my message today is that we are the custodians of this cherished family tradition in Winnipeg. Our job is to continue to produce "magic for the children" and grow this Parade - to grow it with participation and with passion from all citizens in Winnipeg and Manitoba and remind them of our history from the past. We need your support and help to move forward for the next 100 years!

Thank you