

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

April 19, 2006

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Subject: Lowering of Hiring Age
All Wards

Purpose:

To report on the issues raised in the communication dated March 9, 2006, from CUPE Local 79 regarding lowering the minimum hiring age to 14-years of age for Local 79 part-time Recreation Workers.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the receipt of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

Background:

On March 9, 2006, Economic Development and Parks Committee received a written communication from CUPE Local 79 requesting clarification on the following issues regarding the lowering of the hiring age to 14-years of age for Local 79 part-time Recreation Workers:

- 1) Is the hiring of 14- and 15-year olds being used as a low wage strategy to provide regular recreation programs and after school child care programs?
- 2) The City has announced that a new expanded after school childcare program will be staffed by 14- and 15-year old Recreation Workers. The City already has thousands of Recreation workers and childcare workers employed to provide these programs. Will their work hours be reduced as a result of hiring 14- and 15-year olds?
- 3) Parks, Forestry and Recreation previously provided Leadership in Training programs for 14- and 15-year olds hired as staff for summer camps. These opportunities have been

reduced and are not provided at every Parks, Forestry and Recreation summer program. Leadership in Training provided valuable support, instruction and mentoring to 14- and 15-year old staff. We believe that if the City moves to lower the hiring age, it should also expand the Leadership in Training programming for 14- and 15-year old staff.

- 4) What category or job classification will the 14- and 15-year olds be placed in, and will there be any restrictions placed on 14- and 15-year old staff?
- 5) Will 14- and 15-year olds receive direct one-on-one supervision?
- 6) Will they directly supervise program participants on their own?
- 7) Will 14- and 15-year old staff be included in camp ratios? Will they continue to supervise campers at the current 1 to 10 ratio in place for 6- to 12-year olds?
- 8) The application process for 14- and 15-year olds should be the same as it is for all staff?
- 9) Some 14- and 15-year olds may have limited relevant life experiences. There should be appropriate training for them to compensate for this.

Comments:

- 1) The hiring of 14- and 15-year olds is not part of a low wage strategy. This process was designed to enhance the opportunities offered to youth within our Division.
- 2) Lowering the hiring age to 14 will not displace any other staff, nor reduce the hours of any staff.
- 3) Leadership in training programs continue to be a priority for Parks, Forestry and Recreation and there are plans to expand and revise these opportunities in conjunction with the lowering of the hiring age. Preference in hiring, as it always has been with 16-year olds, will be given to youth who have completed a Leader in Training Program.
- 4) Existing classifications within Local 79's Recreation Workers Unit will be used when hiring 14/15 year olds. Great care will be taken to ensure that these staff are hired into appropriate positions.
- 5) All 14- and 15-year old staff will receive one-on-one supervision or direct support from another staff.
- 6) They will not be supervising participants on their own and will be placed in program support and assistant roles where they will be working with staff at least 16-years of age.
- 7) Camp ratios will not be adjusted as a result of this process. These numbers are based on staff to participant ratios and will not change as a result of lowering the hiring age. As with all other staff, great care will be taken to ensure that qualified staff will be hired for

these positions and that they receive the appropriate training to ensure a safe camp environment.

- 8) The application and hiring process will be the same for all staff regardless of age.
- 9) Staff recruiting, hiring and training has and continues to be a top priority within Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Great care will be taken to ensure that the right staff is selected for the right job, regardless of their age. We continue to improve our level of training in order to ensure that our staff, regardless of their age, are prepared for their employment with our Division.

Conclusions:

Based on unanimous City Council approval of Our Common Grounds and the research and analysis completed by staff, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division will lower the minimum hiring age to 14-years of age for CUPE Local 79 Part-time Recreation Workers.

At a meeting with CUPE Local 79 on April 13, 2006, the issues regarding the lowering of the hiring age to 14 years of age were clarified.

This innovative approach will provide additional opportunities for youth in recreation and further demonstrates that Parks, Forestry and Recreation is taking a greater leadership role in the community. As a testament to this approach, some of our very successful current management staff in Parks, Forestry and Recreation started in recreation at the age of 14.

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