

PE16.2.3



Toronto Alliance for
Better Parks

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Members of the Parks and Environment Committee,

Toronto Park People would like to indicate its general support for Item PE16.2 – Community Fundraising for Park Enhancements and provide some short comments. We are sorry that we are unable to attend the meeting in person to deputate.

At Park People, we know that when residents get involved, parks get better. We help facilitate neighbourhood engagement in their park and build partnerships between community, the city and others to find shared solutions for better parks. We're now working with more than 50 park friends groups and a key activity for many of these groups is fundraising for park enhancement projects.

Since the creation of our organization in early 2011 we have built a good partnership with PFR Division, the PF&R Partnership Development Unit (PDU) and the Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation (TPTF). We have teamed up with park groups, the PDU and TPTF to kick start a number of capital fundraising projects.

PFR's efforts to engage with community and facilitate local fundraising efforts have been improving. TPTF is now an invaluable tool for groups to use to fundraise and provide tax receipts for donations. We were very pleased with your Committee's support of PFR adding new resources to TPTF in next year's budget. We are also very pleased that the PDU is hiring new staff to fill vacancies and the quality of the new staff (one of the new people is an experienced leader of one of the city's most effective local park groups).

We just have 2 comments to add:

- (1) To continue these improvements, TPTF and the Partnership Development Unit will need additional resources. We believe this is a very prudent investment from the City as this small investment will help facilitate significant new community donations into their parks.
- (2) Within PFR, there needs to be better focus on all elements of supporting community engagement in their parks, not just community fundraising. A number of park groups have told us that they have contacted the PDU because they assumed that the Unit was responsible for facilitating all community efforts to improve their park (e.g. resolving permitting and insurance issues, support for setting up a pumpkin parade, etc). But the Unit only supports fundraising. Either this Unit should obtain additional resources to provide this one stop support for groups or there should be better coordination of these services within PFR to support the work of local park groups to both fundraise and animate their park.

Thank you for your consideration,

David Harvey, Director

