

Entering into an Agreement with Fred Victor Centre at Regent Park

Date: March 3, 2023

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Toronto Centre - 13

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek authority from City Council to enter into a management agreement with Fred Victor Centre, a registered charity. The agreement would initiate a community partnership to govern use of park space and would allow Fred Victor to manage, on behalf of the City, the greenhouse, bake oven and community garden complex at Regent Park for community benefit. This approach is intended to ensure these park amenities live up to their full potential for serving the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to negotiate and sign, on behalf of the City of Toronto, a management agreement with Fred Victor Centre, for a term of five years with a renewal term of up to five years at the General Manager's discretion, for the purposes of managing the greenhouse complex including the bake oven and adjacent garden at Regent Park on the City of Toronto's behalf, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and in form and content satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The 2023 Council Approved Capital Budget and 2024-2032 Capital Plan for Parks, Forestry and Recreation does not include funding for rehabilitation and/or improvements to the greenhouse, bake oven amenities and community garden complex in Regent Park. Any funding requirement, if needed, to address future capital improvements and

repairs in these City-owned assets will be included in future year budget submissions for consideration.

Fred Victor Centre will pay nominal licence fees for the use of the park amenities and all costs related to the maintenance, management and programming of the facilities would be at a cost to Fred Victor Centre under the Management Agreement, as described in the report. There are no additional costs to Parks, Forestry and Recreation operating budget from the execution of this management agreement.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on August 25, 2010, City Council adopted TE36.18, Final Report - 591 Dundas Street East, Regent Park Phase 2, which referenced the development of the central neighbourhood park in Regent Park including a master plan for the park.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2010.TE36.18>

At its meeting on February 1, 2 and 3, 2005, City Council adopted the Final Report, Application to Amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, Regent Park Revitalization. The report recommended approval of the Regent Park Secondary Plan and referenced the need for community garden space in Regent Park as part of the neighbourhood's redevelopment.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/council/cc050201/te1rpt/cl004.pdf>

COMMENTS

In 2015 the City entered into a licence agreement with the Toronto Christian Resource Centre (CRC) that governed CRC's use of the demonstration garden, small greenhouse and bake oven amenities grouped together in the City-owned park called Regent Park. The backdrop to this arrangement was the historic revitalization of the Regent Park neighbourhood and the completion in 2014 of the central park in the community, also called Regent Park (known locally as the "big park").

Based on the understanding that a community is more than its buildings, the revitalization project brought together the City, the community and project developers to create a Regent Park Social Development Plan. This plan engaged residents and community agencies to guide the development of healthy social infrastructure. Food emerged as a key theme, especially in a community deeply rooted in people gathering over food, coming together to share culinary history and creations from diverse cultures around the world, at a host of community events. The community garden, greenhouse and bake oven in the "big park" have been integral elements in the vision.

The licence agreement with CRC expired in 2018 and went into overhold. Shortly afterwards, in January 2020, CRC amalgamated with Fred Victor Centre, the multi-

service organization and registered charity that works with individuals and families across 20 Toronto sites. CRC and Fred Victor had a shared focus on affordable and supported housing programs, high-impact food security programs, skill building, employment, and community-based drop-in programs. The amalgamation was intended to create broader and deeper supports for the people who use their services. Fred Victor Centre assumed CRC's 40 Oak Street location in Regent Park, which runs community food programs in addition to other social services.

The licence agreement continued in overhold during this period and during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted regular programming. During this time, various deficiencies were identified in the operating structure, by both the Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Fred Victor Centre. Different access and permitting processes for the various amenities created confusion in the community for finding pathways to realizing social activations of the physical assets.

The proposed management agreement seeks to improve on-site coordination and oversight and to formalize responsibilities for maintenance and scheduling. The management agreement also proposes a streamlined approach with a formal governance structure and accountabilities to create a better functioning complex responding to community needs. A liaison committee will be established, comprising members from Fred Victor Centre and Parks, Forestry and Recreation to coordinate City and community efforts and resources, ensuring the greenhouse complex is living up to its potential to serve the community. Many of the technical terms and conditions in the CRC licence agreement would be included in the new agreement.

Fred Victor Centre's vision for the Regent Park complex would enhance its existing presence under the older licence agreement by bringing some of its programming at its Oak Street facility into the community. Examples include Taste of Regent Park; a Harvest Festival; the Women's Bakery Training Program; 40 Oak Meal program; cultural events; celebrations; training and community capacity-building, including advocacy and peer development. At the same time, community members and organizations would have access to the spaces through Fred Victor Centre intake and booking services, aligned with City policies, similar to other third-party-run community spaces like those at Wychwood Barns Park. It is expected that Fred Victor Centre would increase staffing to advance the work at Regent Park. The proposed management agreement would outline the roles and responsibilities of the Fred Victor Centre and the City.

While any repair or capital work for the greenhouse complex is outside the scope of the recommendation in this report, it is anticipated that the working relationships developed through the proposed management agreement would continue the conversation around the state of the greenhouse, with any future recommendations advanced through the City's budget process and related fundraising proposals.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Janie Romoff
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Site Plan for Regent Park Greenhouse and Garden Complex

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Schedule A

Greenhouse and Garden complex at Regent Park
Yellow Border – Licenced Area

