

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM5.35	ACTION			Ward: 11
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Advancing grant funding at Paul Martel Park - Authority for staff to amend existing license agreement with Aki Wiidookaagewin (Earth Helpers) and The Neighbourhood Group - by Councillor Dianne Saxe, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to Toronto and East York Community Council. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Dianne Saxe, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie, recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to amend the existing agreement with The Neighbourhood Group Community Services, and Aki Wiidookaagewin – Earth Helpers, to allow the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to extend the agreement for up to an additional five one-year terms, at their sole discretion, ending on April 30, 2030, and to allow a temporary canopy, shed and gazebo to be constructed in Paul Martel Park, within the park's service area, on terms satisfactory to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

Summary

Paul Martel Park is a small (1,030 square meters) and well-loved park in the Bloor-Spadina neighbourhood of University-Rosedale. It features native-plant gardens, trees, seating areas and a gathering space. Formerly called Ecology Park, the Park's history is tied deeply to community advocacy and stewardship. Originally a project of the Pollution Probe Foundation, the Annex Residents' Association became the park's champion after it needed rebuilding following the expansion of the adjacent Toronto Transit Commission Spadina Station in the 1990s.

It became a City park in 2003 and was renamed Paul Martel Park, after the Park's original community champion, in 2014. In recent years, in collaboration with Parks, Forestry and Recreation, an Indigenous community organization named Aki Wiidookeegewin (Earth Helpers) has undertaken an Indigenous gardening training program in Paul Martel Park, focusing primarily on native plant cultivation and related Indigenous cultural activities, supported in part by funding from Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training. The program helps trainees build their resumes through instructor-led activities.

In 2022, the City entered into a license agreement with Aki Wiidookaagewin and its trustee partner, The Neighbourhood Group, to formalize the programming in Paul Martel Park. The

agreement is renewable year-by-year up to a maximum of three years total, ending on April 30, 2025.

The recommendation in this motion would give authority to amend the existing license agreement, including a term extension, to authorize the installation of temporary structures in the park's service area to support the Indigenous cultural programming. Aki Wiidookaagewin and The Neighbourhood Group would be responsible for maintaining the structures in a neat and tidy appearance, and removing them upon expiry of the agreement. If not removed, the structures will become the City's property. They would provide programming that is also available to the public including workshops and tours. The program actively supports the strategic actions of the Reconciliation Action Plan. The structures (specifically a canopy, shed and gazebo) would be funded by a federal grant.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM5.35