

Lansdowne Urban Park: Accountability and Governance

FEDCO, Ottawa City Council

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Why FEDCO?

- If there is a problem with the operations of the Lansdowne urban park, why has this not been raised at the Community and Protective Services Committee which has responsibility for Parks?
- The three communities around Lansdowne are unaware of any significant problems pertaining to City staff's management of the urban park.
- The report shows staff have increased park usage and have consistently operated within budget, in fact generated surpluses.
- What's wrong with the urban park as it now is?

Out of the Blue

- Good governance is not spontaneously acquiescing to an unsolicited, unsubstantiated and unanalyzed proposal from the private sector.
- At no point did OSEG consult with surrounding communities in the course of its “strategic review.”
- The “strategic review” remains a hidden document even though it apparently is the basis for OSEG’s request to take over management of the urban park.
- OSEG is primarily an entertainment and real estate enterprise.
- The City has far more parks management expertise.

Environmental Impacts

- “There are no environmental implications associated with this information report.” (p23)
- Yet, OSEG’s apparent reason for taking over management of the urban park is to increase use of Lansdowne by one million people per year.
- Given the absence of rapid transit to Lansdowne, how is it conceivable that an additional million people won’t have an environmental impact?

Ongoing Accountability

- City staff and councillors are now accountable for the operations of the urban park.
- If there is an issue with urban park it gets resolved with staff and the Councillor.
- The accountability to the public will be diminished if there is a private operator of the urban park.

Conclusion

- The City should not acquiesce to an unsolicited request from OSEG to operate an important public park.
- The key questions are:

Is the urban park working well?

If not, what could be done to improve it?

What are impacts of making these changes?

How should the changes be made?

→Need logical, factual and community-based analysis – not immediate capitulation to private interests.