



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: July 3, 2013  
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Meeting Date: July 10, 2013

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services

FROM: General Manager of Community Services in conjunction with the General Manager, Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Windup of the Vancouver Athletic Commission and Repeal of Vancouver Athletic Commission By-law

### *RECOMMENDATION \**

- A. THAT Council thank all current and past members of the Vancouver Athletic Commission ("VAC") for their valuable service contribution to the City of Vancouver in support of boxing, martial arts and other professional combat sports.
- B. THAT the remaining funds from the Vancouver Athletic Commission's account be transferred to the Sport Hosting Grant Program for allocation to youth sport preferably in the area of combat sports/martial arts.
- C. THAT Council repeal the Vancouver Athletic Commission By-law.

### *REPORT SUMMARY \**

The Province of British Columbia enacted legislation entitled the "Athletic Commissioner Act" to create a Provincial Athletic Commission to replace municipally created and appointed athletic commissions throughout the Province, including the VAC. This report recommends that current and former members of the VAC be acknowledged for their service contributions, that any remaining funds in the VAC's bank account be transferred to youth sport through the Sport Hosting Granting Program and that the Vancouver Athletic Commission By-law be repealed.

*COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS \**

On March 26, 2009, council approved a motion dealing with Mixed Martial Arts and resolved that the City request the Provincial Government to create a governing body for Mixed Martial Arts in British Columbia.

*CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS \**

The General Managers of Community Services and Parks and Recreation recommend approval of the foregoing recommendations in this report

*REPORT**Background/Context \**

The Vancouver Athletic Commission is a Council-appointed advisory body that has been regulating professional combat sports in Vancouver since 1945. Since its inception, the VAC has sanctioned numerous professional boxing, wrestling and mixed martial arts events. One of the main roles of the VAC has been to regulate these professional sports to ensure the safety of the fighters.

The VAC sanctioned two of the largest professional combat sport events in the history of the Province by sanctioning two mixed martial events coordinated by the UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) group. The two events held in 2010 and in 2011 at Rogers Arena drew a total of over 32,000 spectators.

Historically, Provincial legislation required that these sports be sanctioned by local athletic commissions. However, in May, 2012, the Provincial Government introduced legislation to create a Provincial Athletic Commission to replace the municipal commissions that existed throughout the Province. The Athletic Commissioner Act came into effect on May 30, 2013 and the new Provincial Athletic Commission was established and has commenced operations as of May 30, 2013.

The Athletic Commissioner Act repeals Part XIX of the Vancouver Charter and removes the City's power to regulate professional boxing, martial arts and other combat sports through the VAC. The Act grants all regulatory powers over professional combat sports to the newly created Provincial Athletic Commission.

*Strategic Analysis \**

The creation of a Provincial Athletic Commission was supported previously by City Council and by the VAC as a preferred approach to sanctioning professional combat sporting events. A provincial model has been adopted in many other Canadian provinces, and it provides for a more consistent and coordinated approach to sanctioning combat sports. It also mitigates any risk that municipalities were carrying with respect to appointing an athletic commission to carry out this regulatory role on their behalf.

Pursuant to the City's Vancouver Athletic Commission By-law, the VAC collected funds from event promoters for the purpose of carrying out its regulatory functions and cover costs related to medical staff, event officials, policing, and ambulance services.

Currently, the VAC has a cash balance of \$28,274.49 in its bank account. At its meeting on May 6, 2013, the Commission approved the following motion with respect to this remaining balance:

*THAT the Vancouver Athletic Commission (VAC) recommends to City Council that the balance of the bank account be donated to youth sport organizations in Vancouver, preferably for combat sports/martial arts.*

Given the remaining VAC funds came from sport organizations, staff believe it would be appropriate to transfer the remaining funds to youth sport as recommended by the Commission. This can be accomplished through the Sport Hosting Grant Program which is funded in the City's annual grants budget. Park Board staff administer the grant program on behalf of the City. The allocation of grants is done through an annual report to City Council from the General Manager of Park Board and does not require Park Board approval.

#### *Financial \**

The transfer of the remaining balance of funds from the VAC to the Sport Hosting Grant program budget would have no net financial implications to the City, but would provide an increased level of funding to support worthy youth sporting endeavours.

#### *Legal*

The Athletic Commissioner Act has repealed those sections of the Vancouver Charter which gave the City the power to regulate professional combat sports, including the power to pass a by-law creating the VAC. Therefore, since the City no longer has the power to regulate professional combat sports, it is recommended that the Vancouver Athletic Commission By-law be repealed.

#### *CONCLUSION \**

The Vancouver Athletic Commission has done much historically to support combat sporting events in the City and past and current members should be acknowledged for their efforts and contributions. This report provides recommendations to deal with the remaining funds in the Commission's bank account and to repeal the Vancouver Athletic Commission by-law.

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