

March 5, 2007

TO: ALL CUPE LOCAL 500 MEMBERS

Assiniboine Park to be privatized!

As you may be aware, the City is moving towards the creation of an independent agency to run Assiniboine Park. Local 500 members have objected to this move and held a rally in the Park last fall to let City Councillors know our opinion.

We suspect that an independent agency will eventually reduce public access to the Park and in time, we may see new fees for parking or booking of events in the Park. We are concerned that a new agency would ultimately choose revenue generating activities for the Park over free public access activities.

On February 7, 2007 a report by City administration was tabled to create a new not-for-profit corporation for Assiniboine Park and Forest that would operate independently from the City of Winnipeg. Its mandate would be to lead, manage, fundraise, restore and redevelop the overall Park and its amenities.

The report says that the Board of Directors of the Corporation would be chosen by the Mayor and Council. They expect to appoint representatives of the City, Province of Manitoba, Zoological Society of Manitoba, Friends of the Conservatory, Partners in the Park, Charleswood Rotary Club and the community at large.



CUPE Local 500 is proposing a more viable option for the City. We believe in a governance model that assures the Park remains a public service and asset. Our model, involves City operations working with a new Winnipeg Parks Board. This structure would provide the most efficient operational support, funding potential, volunteer and community input.

The union and other supporters of a public park will present to the City's Executive Policy Committee in early March and to City Council on March 21. It is important that all CUPE members come out to support the workers at Assiniboine Park. We need a massive turnout on March 21 to show City Hall that we mean business about keeping our parks public!

Please watch for more information on this issue or go to the Local 500 website at www.cupe500.mb.ca.