
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 26, 2009
File No.: 0550 - 01
To: City Manager
From: Director of Recreation & Cultural Services
Subject: **International Children's Games**
Report Prepared by: Sport & Facilities Programs Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT City Council support sending a letter of invitation from the City of Kelowna to the President of the International Children's Games (ICG) to bring the ICG Winter Games to Kelowna from January 20-24, 2011.

AND THAT, if the invitation from the International Children's Games Committee is accepted, a steering committee be formed to complete an assessment including the development of an implementation and hosting plan.

AND THAT staff report back to City Council prior to confirming acceptance to host the Games.

BACKGROUND:

The International Children's Games (ICG) is the largest international multi-sport youth games and is a sanctioned event of the International Olympic Committee. The inaugural Games were held in 1968 and have since grown into a significant sporting and cultural event over the years. The event is primarily based in European cities but has been hosted in North America a few times (including twice in Hamilton, Ontario).

The stated goal of the International Children's Games is to enable, develop and advance the meeting, understanding and friendship of students from different countries, and to advance the Olympic idea.

This event is different from other "games" in that ICG competitors, aged 12 to 15 years, represent City teams, as apposed to regional, provincial or national teams. Cities are invited to send teams based on hosting and participating in previous Games. As stated in the ICG statutes; "fair play is top priority, qualifying competitions should be avoided and records are not aimed for".

There are six core winter sports that are designated mandatory events; Figure Skating, Speed Skating, Curling, Nordic Skiing, Alpine Skiing and Snowboarding. Hockey (and team sports in general) are traditionally not included in the games. It is our intention to include hockey in the Kelowna Games.



Sport is not the only item on the agenda of these Games, they are also designed to create an opportunity for cultural exchange, teaching participants about other cultures and different ways of life. For this purpose, other non-sport based leisure and cultural events are included in the Games protocol to enable the participants to discover the host town and its surrounding area.

A regional director of the ICG is an Okanagan resident and has extensive previous experience with these games. He has recommended Kelowna as a potential host city for the 2011 International Children's Winter Games to the ICG Board of Director's. We understand that the ICG Committee is interested in receiving an invitation to come to Kelowna. This would mark the first Winter Games to be hosted outside of Europe.

Our initial investigation into hosting and submitting a letter of invitation included:

- Confirmation that our sport venues meet ICG standards. A key venue for these Games involves Big White Ski Resort. Through discussions with Big White representatives, they have confirmed support in staging this event.
- Communication with local key sport organizations (Curling, Speed Skating and Figure Skating) has demonstrated general support for the event. While the timing may conflict with some key competitions, local sport associations have the technical expertise to lead and/or support this level of competition.

Logistics and Process

- Preliminary forecasts suggest 700 to 1000 games participants and officials visiting Kelowna for 4-7 days. Projections are based on participation of 30 invited cities with teams comprised of up to 24 members (not including hockey). The teams would be accompanied by additional staff, coaches, trainers and supporters. Teams often extend their stays in the host community beyond the Games themselves.
- Teams participating in the games travel to the host City at their own expense and are responsible for many of their own expenses and requirements, similar to attending a regular invitational tournament. For example, athletes have the choice of billeting with Kelowna families or booking at local hotels.
- Key responsibilities of the Host Committee involve organizing:
 - General community hosting logistics
 - VIP transportation
 - Accommodation facilitation
 - Food at sport venues
 - Facility access and sport events
 - Opening and Closing Ceremonies
 - Cultural and entertainment events
 - Volunteer management
- The awarding of the games is based on a letter from the Mayor of Kelowna to the President of the International Children's Games inviting the Games to come to Kelowna.

- The regional representative of the International Children's Games will ensure the signed invitation reaches the ICG President's office by June 9, 2009 prior to the June 23 ICG Executive Meeting in Athens, Greece. The games will be awarded at that meeting. The successful City will be notified by the President's office.
- The host City then has a period of approximately 3 months to conduct a community assessment of the feasibility of hosting the Games. At the end of the assessment a decision is made to continue with plans to implement the Games or to decline the opportunity.
- Once a city is selected and has confirmed it's intention to host the Games, it sends out invitations to other Cities to participate. The ICG has a protocol on how other cities are invited to attend. The host city has the opportunity to invite specific cities of it own choosing (i.e. sister cities). Through this model the "fraternity" of cities has grown over the years.
- A Host Agreement would be signed in Kelowna in the September-October 2009

Benefits

The hosting of multi sport games, especially one with an international participation, brings significant value and benefit to a community:

- Profile and attention on youth, sport, culture and community
- Significant economic benefit through a sport tourism event, especially one that is in the winter season
- Opportunity to promote benefits of active lifestyles and further link sport and culture
- Unique opportunities for local athletes and spectators
- Opportunity to promote Kelowna to an international audience.
- Opportunity to create an ongoing involvement in an international "fraternity" that will provide unique sport and cultural experiences for Kelowna youth.

Should City Council support sending a letter of invitation, and Kelowna is offered the opportunity, a steering committee will be established to develop an implementation and hosting plan. One of our next key steps would be to obtain formal support from key organizations and garner support in the greater community.

This event has significant positive implications beyond that of just a sporting event. With less emphasis on high level competition and the inclusion of cross cultural opportunities, we anticipate a good fit with certain service clubs and local cultural associations.

INTERNAL CIRCULATION TO: General Manager, Community Services; Director of Financial Services

FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS: Initial budget estimates put the operating budget in the range of \$150,000 to \$180,000. Preliminary investigation indicates these games will be primarily funded by external means (fundraising, sponsorship, donations, in kind, etc) with minimal financial (approximately \$20,000) support required from the City. If successful in the invitation to host, a comprehensive budget will be developed clearly showing detailed operating requirements and revenue sources. This budget will be presented to council as part of the final assessment prior to approval to proceed.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS: Should City Council endorse the letter of invitation and it be accepted by the ICG, the Recreation & Cultural Department would assign a staff liaison to participate on the steering committee.

Considerations that were not applicable to this report:

EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS:
ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION:
LEGAL/STATUTORY AUTHORITY:
LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS:
EXISTING POLICY:
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Submitted by:



J. Gabriel, Director of Recreation & Cultural Services

Approved for Inclusion:



J. Vos, General Manager, Community Services

cc: General Manager, Community Services
Director of Financial Services

Attachments: History of the International Children's Games

History of ICG

The first two articles of the ICG constitution speak to the principles behind the games:

“Art. 1 The International Children's Games are an alliance of cities, organizations and individuals who pursue the common goal of forming nation-linking friendship through the exercising of sports and the arranging of sports competitions.

Art. 2 The goal of the International Children's Games is to enable, develop and advance the meeting, understanding and friendship of students from different countries, and to advance the Olympic idea. In this sense, sports competitions are arranged for students. The International Children's Games pursue their goals in a non-political, non-denominational and non-racist way”.

Why organize such International Children's Games ? The spiritual father of these Games, the Slovenian sports instructor Metod Klemenc, born 1934 in Ljubljana, explained: "My childhood suffered from the 2nd World War. It destroyed my family. Since I -within my possibilities - wanted to create a better world based on friendship, sport seemed to be one of the best means to bring together young people from different countries. Therefore you need will power and friends who are enthusiastic about sport, and who are willing to give up their spare time." In this sense Metod Klemenc organized the 1st International Children's Games in June 5, 1968 in Celje, Slovenia.

There have been 42 ICG's since the inception, hosted by 31 different cities (some have hosted more than one games) in 21 different countries.

Games have had delegations from 370 towns from 85 countries (from Europe, Asia, North and South America, Africa).

Canada has hosted 2 ICG's: Hamilton has hosted both; 1994 and 2000. 29 different Canadian cities have sent over 60 teams to various games over the years.

Over 35 000 children in the age from 12 to 15 years have participated in these sporting contests promoting the ideals stated in the ICG mandate:

“These games are designed to promote peace and friendship through sports to the world's youth”.

“Sport is not the only item on the agenda of these Games, they should also be a contribution to learning about foreign cultures and ways of life. For this purpose, trips, sight-seeing tours and leisure events are offered to enable the participants to discover the host town and its surrounding area”.

Once a City has hosted the games they become a member of the ICG “General Assembly”. All host cities can look forward to invitations to participate in future games in other Cities.