

# TORONTO STAFF REPORT

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March 7, 2002

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Joe Halstead, Commissioner Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

Subject: The Hanlan's Point Clothing Optional Beach  
Toronto Centre-Rosedale - Ward 28

Purpose:

To report as requested by Council February 29, March 1, 2, 2000, on the pilot initiative at Hanlan's Point and to recommend the permanent designation of the site as a clothing optional beach.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the area of land at Hanlan's Point currently being utilized as a pilot site for a clothing optional beach be designated as a permanent site for the clothing optional beach;
- (2) Parks and Recreation staff, in consultation with the Toronto Police Marine Unit, be authorized to modify the size of the beach in response to local conditions or demand; and
- (3) the City Solicitor be authorized to prepare the changes to the by-law and that the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

In May, 1999, City Council approved a one-year pilot project for the implementation of a clothing optional beach at Hanlan's Point and recommended that review be completed after the 1999 season. Council February 29, March 1, 2, 2000 approved a two-year extension of the pilot through the 2001 season.

This report provides information on the results of the pilot project and recommends that the beach be designated as a permanent site for a clothing optional beach.

#### Comments:

The pilot project to assess the operational impact, public sector response and other issues associated with the implementation of a clothing optional beach at Hanlon's Point was completed at the end of the summer of 2001. The pilot ran for three years, a period deemed sufficient to properly assess the public's support for the initiative and the impacts of operating a clothing optional beach.

#### Operational Impact

The beach is approximately 1000 metres long and 50 - 60 metres wide, it is located along the westerly edge of Hanlan's Point. Since its inception, the beach has enjoyed excellent attendance on days where the weather encourages outdoor activities. Peak use during the summer reaches 650 - 700 users on warm, sunny days on the weekend. Transport to the beach is by way of the Island ferry service who advise that the establishment of the beach has had a positive impact on ferry traffic.

There have been no more incidents reported by the public on this beach than on any other beaches throughout the City. In response to the criteria established at the beginning of the pilot initiative, fencing and signage have been installed to clearly delineate the limits of the beach to the public. To provide users with improved convenience and increased access to the police, staff are working with Bell Canada to install two public payphones in the vicinity of the beach. In order to provide beach users with an opportunity to swim in supervised waters, lifeguard operations operated by the Toronto Police Marine Unit have been modified to provide coverage for the northerly 75 metres of the beach.

Staff have worked closely with The Toronto Police Marine Unit to monitor activities on the beach. It has become evident during the pilot, that certain events or activities in the City, or on the Island, generate a need to either increase or decrease the size of the beach to meet operational demands for beach access. Staff, in consultation with the police, require authority to realign the limits of the beach to address these demands or meet these conditions. Accordingly, it is recommended that staff, in consultation with the police, be granted authority to temporarily modify the size of the clothing optional beach in order to meet local conditions or address demands placed on the limited beach front at this location.

#### Impact on the Public

The establishment of the beach has not generated a significant number of complaints during the three years it has been in existence. There appears to be support for the beach and an understanding that this type of beach can exist in harmony with textile, or clothing required beaches. The Toronto Island Residents have expressed no negative issues associated with the operation of the area.

A number of groups have worked diligently to support the pilot, the Hanlan's Point Naturists, TNT Men and the Federation of Canadian Naturists to promote safe and courteous use of the beach. They have assumed a role in maintaining a positive relationship with beach users, park staff, the police and the public through advocating appropriate behaviour and respect for the privacy of others.

Conclusions:

The pilot project has been successful in introducing a clothing optional beach to Toronto. The beach has gained acceptance from the general public and has enjoyed growing popularity among its users. The relationship between staff and the Toronto Police Marine Unit remains strong, resulting in an environment that permits beach users to feel safe without sacrificing privacy. Improvements to the site are implemented as need arises.

The authority sought in this report for staff and the police to modify the size of the beach area as local conditions dictate, or user demand necessitates, will provide the additional authority necessary for continued operation of a safe facility.

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