

From: "Levitt, Karen" <karen.levitt@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

Date: 8/8/2025 10:58:51 AM

Subject: Status Update: Unpermitted African Descent Festival at English Bay

Attachments: COM - PB - BS - Media Statement - African Descent Festival 2025 - FINAL.pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

Below is a status update from Amit Gandha, Director of Parks, concerning the unpermitted African Descent Festival that had been advertised to take place this weekend ... for your information.

Thanks,

Karen

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Karen Levitt, Acting City Manager

karen.levitt@vancouver.ca

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the traditional territories of the x m k y m/Musqueam, S wx\u817 \_w\u7mesh/Squamish and s lilw ta /Tsleil-Waututh nations

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From: Park Board GM's Office

Sent: Friday, August 08, 2025 10:57 AM

To: Park Board Commissioners - DL

Cc: PB LT (Leadership Team) - DL

PB Communications

Subject: STATUS UPDATE: Unpermitted African Descent Festival at English Bay

Dear Commissioners,

This email update is to share a status of the non-permitted African Descent Festival at English Bay.

Park Rangers, VPD and CPS have been on site at English Bay & Sunset Beach since 6am communicating with a small contingent of the festival organizers (3), supplier (1) & members of the public. Park staff & VPD have reiterated to the primary festival organizer, Yasin M. Kiraga, that without an official special event permit, the festival infrastructure cannot be loaded into the park. The conversation with the organizer is still on-going. The stage supplier was also informed of the situation and left the site.

An information letter to approx. 70 vendors/suppliers who participated in last year's festival was sent yesterday at 4:30pm with minimal response to date. None of the vendors have arrived on site, as of yet.

The organizer has asked if a scaled down version of the festival can be facilitated; however, due to the lack of clarity around the details of their proposal and the previous history of safety, operational and financial challenges, the Park Board will decline their request.

Attached is the media statement released today August 8, 2025, at 10:00am.

We will continue to provide high level updates as the situation progresses.

Thank you,



Amit Gandha | Director of Parks  
[Vancouver Park Board](#) | 2099 Beach Avenue  
t. 604-654-0781 | [amit.gandha@vancouver.ca](mailto:amit.gandha@vancouver.ca)  
pronouns: he/him/his

*I am thankful to live, work, and play on the unceded, ancestral territories of the x̱m̱ḵ'y̱m̱ ([Musqueam](#)),  
S w̱x̱u817\_wú7mesh ([Squamish](#)), and s̱lilw̱ṯa̱ / seḻḻw̱iṯuḻh ([Tsleil-Waututh](#)) nations.*

**Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation**  
**Media statement**  
**August 8, 2025**

## **Unpermitted African Descent Festival at English Bay**

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is aware that event organizers plan to proceed with an unpermitted African Descent Festival at English Bay Beach Park on August 9 to 10, 2025.

Organizers of the African Descent Festival did not resolve outstanding issues from previous events in time to meet the necessary planning, safety and operational requirements for the 2025 festival. As a result, the Park Board was unfortunately unable to issue a permit for the event. Staff made considerable efforts to support the event by offering alternative solutions, including relocating to the previous festival site at Thornton Park or postponing the event to allow for proper preparation. All options were declined by organizers.

The Park Board deeply values cultural celebrations and recognizes the African Descent Festival's important contribution to our community's cultural fabric. Events like this contribute to vibrant, welcoming community spaces and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of our city. We share in the disappointment that, despite ongoing efforts to find a viable path forward, we were unable to reach a resolution that would allow this year's festival to take place with proper permits.

English Bay Beach Park and facilities will remain open to the public this weekend. However, any organized event taking place in the park will be unpermitted and unsanctioned.

All organized events in parks require permits to ensure public safety, operational readiness and equitable access to shared spaces. The Park Board continues to support diverse cultural celebrations that meet the standards required for safe, successful events in our public spaces.

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### **Media contact:**

Vancouver Park Board  
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