



February 2, 2024

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Steve Jackson - General Manager, Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Nat Bailey Facility Improvements – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the Nat Bailey Stadium facility improvements currently planned and to raise for awareness the likelihood of increased public interest in these improvements upon submission and public release of associated permits.

Background

In January 2007, the Park Board approved the terms of the Lease for the Nat Bailey Stadium, which provided a term of five years, plus four five-year renewals at the option of the Vancouver Canadians Baseball Team, owned by Diamond Baseball Holdings (“DBH”), for a total lease term of up to 25 years.

In December 2020, Major League Baseball (MLB) announced modifications to the structure of Minor League Baseball (“MiLB”) which it also controls. The modified structure resulted in the elimination of 42 minor league teams, leaving 120 teams, or one team at each of the four minor league tiers for all 30 MLB teams. In February 2021, the Vancouver Canadians announced that they had accepted a 10-year Professional Development License with Major League Baseball to be the Toronto Blue Jays High-A Affiliate. The Vancouver Canadians would now play a 132 game season (in contrast to previous 76 game seasons as part of the Class A Short Season), with half of these games to be played out of Nat Bailey Stadium in Vancouver.

As part of the change to the league structure, MiLB issued new stadium requirements to all teams (the “MiLB Mandated Upgrades”). The nature of these improvements focus primarily on player and staff facilities, such as, clubhouse/locker rooms, training facilities, equipment rooms, female umpire facilities, weight rooms, etc. VPB LLP is required to undertake the MiLB Mandated Upgrades to remain compliant and continue operating its team out of Nat Bailey Stadium.

Stadium Maintenance

Over the course of the fourth Renewal term effective May 17, 2023, DBH agreed to a “compliance path” whereby they undertake and complete, at their sole cost and expense, the most urgent (life and safety) down to the least urgent repair and maintenance items as set out in the Maintenance Schedule of the Agreement. Over the last six months, Staff in consultation with REFM have worked with DBH on implementing a definitive compliance schedule with positive progress to date.

Stadium Upgrades and Improvements

DBH has requested that the Park Board work collaboratively in developing a funding solution for the capital improvements, which could include seeking support from more senior levels of government. Working with local architects and contractors, DBH has performed design and feasibility work to accommodate improvements to the stadium as mandated by MiLB. Current cost



estimates for this project are estimated to approach \$20M. DBH is planning to commence construction for 3 separate projects commencing in the Spring of 2024, with completion scheduled in the Winter of 2025. The 3 separate projects are comprised of:

- i) temporary clubhouse outside of the stadium to facilitate renovations;
- ii) renovations to player clubhouse/locker facilities for home and visiting teams;
- iii) a new training center with roof top seating and food and beverage offering

Next Steps

In addition to reviewing and implementing ongoing maintenance work, over the last 6 months staff from the Park Board, REFM and Permitting Services have worked together to facilitate DBH submitting Development Permit (DP) applications to support the 3 projects.

DBH is now in a position to formally submit DP applications, which will be made public via the City's Development Application and Permit webpage over the coming weeks and months.

In the near term, Staff will be returning to the Park Board, and where necessary to Council, with recommendations regarding a potential funding strategy for the MiLB Mandated Upgrades.

Key Messages

- This project and the need to meet MiLB facility standards is the responsibility of the Vancouver Canadians.
- Any questions regarding the project should be referred to the Vancouver Canadians for response.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Jackson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Jackson (*he/him*)
General Manager - Parks and Recreation

/sa/jb/cl

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
PB Communications