

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION



Department of Parks, Montgomery County, Maryland
9500 Brunett Avenue Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

AGENDA DATE: May 29, 2008 #15
Karen Warnick – 301-650-2873

May 22, 2008

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Gene Giddens, Deputy Director *GG*
Christine Brett, Chief Enterprise Division *CB*

FROM: Karen Warnick, Acting Regional Operations Manager, Enterprise Division *Kaw*

SUBJECT: Proposed Fee Increase for Brookside Gardens "Garden of Lights" Show

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of proposed fee.

Staff is proposing to raise the entrance fee for the Brookside Gardens "Garden of Lights" show for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights to \$20 per car.

Background

The Brookside Gardens "Garden of Lights" show is a very popular attraction. In response to visitor feedback, the light show schedule has been adjusted and the show will be open continuously from the Friday after Thanksgiving until the first Sunday after New Year's Day. This will accomplish two things: 1. It will be less confusing to our visitors, because in the past, the light show was closed some weeknights during the opening weeks of the show; and 2. It responds to visitor complaints that the volume was too high on the weekends, leading to overcrowding and excessively long lines waiting to enter the Gardens.

Currently, the fee is \$15 per car any night of the week. Staff is proposing to raise the fee for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights to \$20 per car. By raising the fee on the weekends, visitors have a financial incentive to attend the show during the week, when attendance is traditionally lower. Also, the increased revenue will offset the increased utility costs to provide electricity to the lights.

For comparison purposes, the Symphony of Lights at Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia charged \$20 per car last season.

Staff is recommending this fee to be effective November 1, 2008 and is asking for approval now in order to take advantage of early marketing efforts.