



Date: March 10, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Squamish Welcome Figure in Hadden Park

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board approve the installation of a Welcome Figure in Hadden Park sponsored by the Maritime Museum and the Squamish Nation at no cost to the Board and with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

POLICY

The Board has guidelines for the acceptance of gifts of public art and memorials.

BACKGROUND

In June of 2002, the Maritime Museum notified the Park Board that they were working with the Squamish Nation on a project which included a carving. While the initial intent was that this be a canoe carved on site at the museum, it changed to the creation of a Welcome Figure which moved from Museum property to the park. The Figure would make reference to the former site of the Squamish village of Snauq and provide information on the tradition of Welcome Figures.

The Museum has been working with the Squamish in developing the story of Snauq told from a First Nations perspective. A permanent exhibit, curated by a Squamish Nation member was installed at the museum providing the history of the Squamish as water people and outlining the historical significance of Snauq. Recent land claims rulings have recognized the Squamish as having precedence in this area.

In September, staff met with Museum staff to discuss the Park Board Guidelines for acceptance of the carving and to look at possible siting. Staff also met with the artist to discuss sites. There was some difference of opinion between the artist and staff on the best location for the work. The artist indicated that he and the Squamish involved in the project wanted the high point of lawn on the park spit north of the Museum. Staff suggested a number of alternative sites providing a more natural setting. Discussions ended in late September with the agreement that further discussion on the siting was needed before the Park Board review process could be put in motion.

The Board's Guidelines for Installing Art or Memorials on Park Land call for a three part review

process:

1. a review of design, social and merit issues including consultation with the City of Vancouver's Public Art Committee
2. a technical review of the site and the work (if created)
3. public consultation

DISCUSSION

In January 2003, the Museum notified Park Board staff that the figure had been carved and that the process to install it could begin. At this point, a meeting with the Squamish, the Museum and staff was held. The Squamish indicated that there was only one site of interest to them and that they had planned a pole raising ceremony in a time frame that would not permit the full public process to take place. Subsequently, the Squamish agreed to postpone the ceremony and the review process was initiated.

The City of Vancouver Public Art Committee advises on processes related to the acceptance of public art, ensuring a fair artist selection process and, where the art is complete, appointing a panel to assess the merits of the work and the relevance of the work to the site. Staff consulted the Public Art Committee which declined to comment.

Ledcor is sponsoring the installation and is conducting a soil analysis in order to ascertain the feasibility of the exact location. Ledcor will supply engineered plans for the installation. Planning and Stanley District staff have reviewed the proposal.

In February, staff initiated the public process required by the Board's guidelines. All costs for this process are born by the Museum.

A sign inviting comment was erected on site for three weeks reading:

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation has received a proposal from the Vancouver Maritime Museum and the Squamish Nation to install a 7 metre Welcoming Figure carved by First Nations carver, Darren Yelton, of the Squamish Nation. The Squamish village of Snauq once sat near this site and an interpretive sign is planned to accompany the figure, telling the story of the Squamish and the history of Snauq.

Leaflets were distributed to the 600 households in the area. (Appendix 1)

A public meeting was held on March 6 at the Maritime Museum. An ad was taken out in the Courier advising of the meeting and a notice was placed on the sign in the museum, and sent to community centres for posting.

The public process resulted in a total of 51 responses; 6 phone messages, 14 e-mails and 31

mailed or faxed reply forms on the leaflet.

Of the 50 responses, 27 were clearly supportive. 3 expressed concern over conflict of activities in the siting but supported the concept. 21 were opposed for the following reasons:

5 were concerned about cost to the Park Board

8 commented on the aesthetics and the desire to retain the natural setting

4 commented on the exact site and suggested alternatives such as in front of the Vancouver Museum.

Some mentioned concerns with maintenance, the fact that there was a totem pole on the south side of the museum and the fact that the proposed site is landfill. Three e-mails were received from paragliders who practice winghandling skills on this site. The Squamish have been asked to reconsider the exact location of the pole to enable this sport to continue. The Board has received a letter from the Musqueam advising that they do not support this proposal.

Seven people attended the public meeting. The Museum and the Squamish described the origins of this proposal, the history of the area and the importance of this site to the Squamish. The Kitsilano Chamber of Commerce expressed strong support for this installation and a desire to work further with the Squamish. There were two queries about the Musqueam and the Tsleil Waututh being represented as well. The Squamish responded that traditional protocols have been followed internally and indicated that reference will be made to the two bands on the interpretive sign. In a recent federal settlement, the Squamish were given precedence over this area because of the demonstration of direct lineage relating to Snauq. In response to a question about the land being landfill, the Squamish said that the traditional setting for a welcome figure is near the water and clearly visible to those approaching by sea. Since the water edge has changed, the siting was changed as well. A number of canoe voyage events are planned to visit this site.

Made from a 20 foot red cedar, this pole is a grandfather figure representing strength of spirituality. The arms are raised in a gesture of welcome. Welcome Figures are unique to the Coast Salish and the lack of one in Vancouver has been noted in the past. It will be installed on top of a concrete base 6 feet in height.

On the suggestion of staff, the Squamish have agreed to have the interpretive plaque wrap around the base instead of being a free-standing sign. The wording for the sign has not been finalized. The text will support the exhibit in the Museum in addressing the history of the Snauq, the richness of natural resources in the region, the affiliation with the Musqueam and the Tsleil Waututh, some of the language of the Squamish, the removal of the First Nations from the site in 1913 and the significance of the Welcome Figure in the culture. Staff are requesting that approval for the exact wording, with content as outlined above, be delegated to staff to enable this to proceed more rapidly.

A letter of agreement will be drafted with the Museum and the Squamish outlining ownership, moral rights, maintenance requirements and de-accessioning. The Squamish have indicated that they will take on the responsibility for maintenance.

SUMMARY

The installation of a Welcome Figure on this site will support Museum programming, will reflect a form of restitution for the Squamish and will provide a point of interest.

Prepared by:

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SG