

Date: March 14, 2008



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale

RECOMMENDATION

- A) THAT the Board consult with the public on a proposal from the Biennale Foundation that some of the temporarily installed sculptures remain on park land beyond the originally agreed on 18 month period but not beyond September 2015.*
- B) THAT the Board direct staff to initiate the standard donation processes for the sculpture “Echoes” proposed by the Biennale for donation to the Park Board.*
- C) THAT the Board direct the Biennale to remove of the sculpture “Device to Root Out Evil” as per the terms of the original agreement.*

POLICY

The Arts Policy states that the Board provide a vibrant public realm and support the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.

The Board has established “Review Guidelines for the Donation of Public Art or Memorials”.

BACKGROUND

The Park Board has an Agreement with the Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale for a series of temporary sculpture exhibitions to take place “during and throughout the period of ten (10) years beginning July 25, 2005.” This Agreement was based on Arts Policy objectives to support the experience of public art in parks and on the high level of acceptance of a temporary exhibition of sculptures on park land in 1998. (A copy of the Agreement is attached as Appendix 1.)

The terms of the Agreement set out in section 4 state that:

- there would be six exhibitions of 18 months and one of 12 months duration (4.a);
- all sculpture installations would be subject to the approval of the Park Board, (4.c.iii)
- once approved there would be no change to the sculptures or their siting and all sculptures would be removed within 60 days of the completion of each exhibition (4.b);
- the initial 2005 exhibition involved 17 sites in 10 different parks:

Park	Site	
1.) Kitsilano Beach	1.) grassy area north of the Watermark	
2.) Vanier Park	2.) grassy area north of the Vancouver Museum	
	3.) grassy area northeast of the Vancouver Museum	
3.) Thornton Park	4.) planter west of the via-rail/ bus depot entrance	
4.) Sunset Beach	5.) sand area south of the concession	*
	6.) sand area north-west of site (4.6)	
5.) English Bay	7.) Huntington Meadows near the foot of Broughton	
	8.) west of 2099 beach on grassy cliff-top	
6.) Morton Park	9.) in the grassy triangle	**
7.) Devonian Harbour Park	10.) near the pond	
	11.) grassy area overlooking boat moorage	
	12.) grassy area visible from Georgia St.	
8.) Cadero Park	13.) grassy area	
9.) Harbour Green Park	14.) near the foot of Jervis	***
	15.) grassy square near foot of Bute	****
	16.) grassy area in east section	
10.) Queen Elizabeth	17.) southwest slope below the Celebration Pavilion	

Four sculptures from the initial Biennale exhibition have not yet been removed:

- * *Goulet's "Echoes"*
- ** *Venet's "217.5 Arcs X 13"*
- *** *Etrog's "King and Queen"*
- **** *Oppenheim's "Device to Root Out Evil"*

- while the number and location of sites was not fixed for subsequent exhibitions, the Board could at any time by written notice, limit the number of sites (4.g).

At the time of this Agreement there was no anticipation of the permanent installation of the sculptures on park land and it was on this basis that processes were developed for the approval of the works and their siting. The established processes governing the acceptance of donations of works of art for long term installation were abbreviated based on the temporary (defined in the Agreement as no more than 18 months) nature of these installations.

Subsequent to the Agreement the Biennale brought forward the idea that some of the sculptures stay beyond the 18 month term. Staff informed the Biennale that for this to happen the works would have to be gifted to the City and go through the standard permanent donation processes. The Biennale didn't find this satisfactory and has sought alternative methods to allow for temporary displays of considerably longer duration than 18 months. On May 24, 2007 representatives from the Biennale met with staff and proposed that four sculptures from the 2005-2007 Biennale exhibition be loaned in perpetuity to the Park Board. On July 9, 2007 the Board passed a motion to consult with the public on the permanent sites for these sculptures. (Report attached as Appendix 2).

DISCUSSION

In response to discussions subsequent to July 9, the Biennale has modified their proposal. The current proposal is that:

- there will be no changes to the number of exhibitions or the duration of the Agreement: the final exhibition will complete in July 2015 and all sculptures will be removed and sites restored by September 2015.
- The number sculpture sites and their locations will never exceed the number of sites and locations in the initial exhibition; 17 sites in 10 parks.
- Once approved there will be no change to the sculptures or their siting. Sculptures can remain for the 18 months as per the existing Agreement; sculptures may remain beyond 18 months with the express written permission of the Park Board.
- Sculptures may be brought back for re-installation during the period of this Agreement with the express written permission of the Park Board.

All of the terms in this proposal can be accommodated within the current Agreement.

During the recent exhibition the Biennale enhanced the experience of the sculptures with educational and web-based components as well as lectures, maps and award winning cell-phone based interpretative elements. The overall public response to the Biennale has been positive and it met the Park Board Arts Policy's objective to provide a vibrant public realm and support the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.

However the current proposal from the Biennale does change the nature of these exhibitions. During the development of the current Agreement positive public response to the pilot 'temporary' exhibition was considered. While approval processes were based on the "Review Guidelines for the Donation of Public Art or Memorials" certain processes were also shortened. The existing approval processes for the Biennale installations were developed specifically on the grounds that 'temporary' was defined as no longer than 18 months. In extending the term that a given sculpture may remain in the landscape (up to the 10 year period of the Agreement) the 'temporary' nature of the exhibition is substantially altered and staff proposes that there is a need to go back and consult with the public. Therefore staff recommends that a consultation be undertaken to assess public response to this proposal and that a recommendation be brought back to the Board following its completion.

Additionally the Biennale Foundation proposes the donation to the Park Board of one of the sculptures from the first exhibition, Michel Goulet's "Echoes." This work is proposed for permanent installation at Kitsilano Beach next to the Watermark Restaurant. As this is now a straight-forward donation, all standard processes can be followed for consideration of the donation. As the site proposed for the donation is one of those identified as a designated site for the Biennale, an alternate site will be agreed on for the Biennale's remaining exhibitions.

The work "Device to Root Out Evil" was sold at the Biennale's auction to a private foundation. The Biennale continues in its contracted role as representative for the work in discussions with the Park Board. The work was located in a site deemed appropriate for temporary installation however a technical analysis of the siting has determined that the work is not comfortably accommodated for an extended period. Public response to the work has been mixed with a greater proportion of the response being negative. Over the past two years members of the public have been informed that this is a temporary placement as per the original agreement with the Foundation. In order to respond to the technical analysis and to respect the public trust, staff recommends that the work now be de-installed within 60 days as per the conditions outlined in the existing agreement with the Biennale.

SUMMARY

The Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale provides opportunities for the people of Vancouver and visitors to the city to interact with a wide range of sculptures in parks. Consideration of the Biennale's proposal for some of the sculptures to remain for a period longer than 18 months would seem reasonable so long as the scope of the exhibition is kept consistent with the original intent. Consultation with the public would be appropriate at this time as this does form a reasonably significant change to the 'temporary' nature of the exhibitions.

The proposal of donation of the sculpture "Echoes" can be processed through the Board's existing donations policy.

The piece "Device to Root Out Evil" should be removed as per the terms in the existing agreement with the Biennale Foundation.

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