

Date: January 21, 2009



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Public Art in Seaforth Peace Park

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board accept the donation of a bronze bust of peace activist Kinuko Laskey by artist Keith Shields to be installed in the South West corner of Seaforth Peace Park with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager

POLICY

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation adopted the *Arts Policy and Recommendations* in November 1993 and a renewed *Arts Policy* in December 2003. The *Arts Policy* states that the Park Board provides a vibrant public realm and supports the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.

In 1988, the Park Board adopted the *Acceptance Guidelines for Long-Term Gifts of Public Art* and in 1997 the Board adopted the *Guidelines for the Review of Proposed Donations of Public Art and/or Memorials to City-Wide Parks*. These guidelines are designed to ensure that high quality artwork and memorials of significance to a broad cross-section of Vancouver residents, can be added to Vancouver's public spaces; and that community response is included in the considerations for the siting of the works.

The core principle of these policies is shared decision-making. The Park Board controls and approves the use of park land and park facilities, reviews the technical analysis conducted by staff and the consultation with the public and ascertains that Park Board processes and policies were properly implemented. The Park Board consults the Public Art Committee regarding the aesthetic and artistic merit of proposed artworks and site contextualization.

BACKGROUND

The Board has received a proposal from representatives of the Vancouver sculptor Keith Shields to install a bronze bust of Kinuko Laskey on the paved area in the southwest corner of Seaforth Peace Park. The bust will be mounted on a simple rectangular foundation. Vancouver and District Labour Council is sponsoring the donation.

DISCUSSION

Kinuko Laskey was a Hiroshima survivor. She met a Canadian soldier whom she married and in 1953 the couple moved to Vancouver where Kinuko began her lifelong work as a peace and disarmament educator and activist.

Seaforth Park was originally named for the nearby Seaforth Armoury. In July 1986 the Park Board approved a fountain memorial to acknowledge the tragedy of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Artist Sam Carter created a water-filled bronze cauldron resting on granite containing an eternal flame, which is now a major feature of the park. The fountain's flame was lit by Kinuko Laskey at the unveiling ceremony.

In the 1992 Seaforth Park officially joined the ranks of Peace Parks across Canada. The celebrations included planting of 12 *Cercidiphyllum* (Katsura) trees, creating a peaceful grove at the park's southern end. At that time it was renamed Seaforth Peace Park.

On July 14, 2008 the Public Art Committee was consulted and approved this sculpture and the proposed siting in Seaforth Peace Park. They further recommended that information about Kinuko be made available to the public as an educational component and that lighting of the sculpture be considered. On August 6, 2008 Park Board staff met on location for a technical review and in October a final site was agreed on by staff, the artist and sponsors. In November the public consultation commenced with site-signage and a brochure detailing the proposal was distributed in a two-block radius. Eight comments were received, seven were highly supportive, only one expressed concern regarding public understanding the factors contributing to the end of the war. Staff clarified that this memorial was dedicated to Kinuko's work as a peace educator and activist. A recommendation that a short biography be included on-site was also received.

Text proposed for the plaque which will be inset on the foundation is in accordance with Park Board standards and reads:

“Kinuko Laskey”

Kinuko Laskey was a sixteen year old student nurse who survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. She moved to Vancouver in 1953. For many years she was unable to speak of her experience. In 1982 she broke her silence and began what became a lifelong work as a peace educator and activist. This bust honours Kinuko's life and her work.

Sponsor: Vancouver and District Labour Council is proud to dedicate this monument to Kinuko Laskey's memory

Sculptor: Keith Shields

With Park Board approval this memorial, installation would begin as soon as possible. A donation equivalent to 10% of the value of the work will be deposited by the sponsor into the Public Art Maintenance Reserve. The plaza area has been identified as in need of some minor upgrades as part of regular park management and these will be completed in conjunction with the installation.

SUMMARY

Staff is recommending the Board approve this proposal. The sculpture meets the Board's criteria for "Long-Term Gifts of Public Art" as determined through the processes outlined in the *Guidelines for the Review of Proposed Donations of Public Art and/or Memorials to City-Wide Parks*. Technical and risk management reviews have been completed to the satisfaction of Park Board's Planning and Operations Departments. The Public Art Committee determined the work has artistic value and that the proposed location provides an appropriate context, (the park's designation as a Peace Park and the specific history of the fountain being significant factors). Community response was also positive. Therefore, based on these results, staff concludes the memorial would be an enhancement to the park and recommends its acceptance.

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APPENDIX A

SITE PLAN



APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE KINUKO LASKEY BUST

