



NOTICE of MOTION

Submitted at the Regular Board meeting held on July 8, 2019

Artistic Enhancement to Dedicated Park Benches

MOVER: Commissioner Barker

WHEREAS:

1. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation has an Arts Policy that recognizes the arts as an essential element in a vital, creative, and balanced city – a policy that seeks to actively facilitate participation in and access to the arts for all;
2. The Park Board holds a vision of a city where the arts are an integral part of everyday life, where community cultural development processes strengthen civil society, where parks and community centres reflect the cultural vitality of the community, and where people are able to learn and express creativity in ways that build healthy communities;
3. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, through its Arts Policy, recognizes that the inherent human capacity for creativity not only promotes wellbeing, it also generates innovative thinking and action that contribute to a vibrant public realm and supports the experience of public art and cultural in the city's parks;
4. The Vancouver Park Board Artists in Communities program, as just one example, hosts artist residencies each year in participating community centres to support artists working in neighbourhoods with the goal to build community by making art consistent with the principles of community cultural development;
5. The City of Vancouver encourages people to “go out and explore arts and culture in Vancouver” and promotes the city as one that is alive with creativity and one that values the importance of arts and culture to a city's livability;
6. A diverse range of artistic endeavors and public art forms abound throughout the city, including artistic expressions on public utility boxes, sidewalks, and buses, as well as large large-scale public murals on buildings, such as those featured during the popular Vancouver Mural Festival that reflect the richness of the city's diverse art scene, community-inspired art initiatives such as the 1991 Michael Dennis “Dude Chilling” art piece inspired by the Dude Chilling Park sign, and the “Love in the Rain” love locks sculpture in Queen Elizabeth Park that allows members of the public to share their feelings at a location and in a manner that has become a popular and attractive scenic feature many enjoy;
7. The Park Board has a donation program whereby park benches can be dedicated with a plaque for a fee of \$5,500 to celebrate a special occasion or to honour someone's memory, with the dedication in effect for ten years from the date of installation, including a future opportunity to renew the dedication after ten years at the rate in place at the time of renewal;



8. The Vancouver Park Board currently has 1,173 dedicated memorial park benches, which, on average, are only cleaned once per year;
9. The family of Colin Mackay paid the Park Board \$5,500 to dedicate a bench at Kitsilano Beach Park to his memory following his accidental death in 2015;
10. To mark the 4th anniversary of his passing, his partner, Julia Goudkova, decided to paint the memorial bench to give the weathered wood some attention, spending four days sanding, priming, and painting, only to be told that the Park Board would remove it within days, prompting a plea from Goudkova and the Mackay family for the Park Board to consider changing its policy on artwork;
11. In response to pleas from Goudkova and the Mackay family, the Park Board allowed the painted memorial bench to stay in place until July 2nd so that the family could celebrate Colin Mackay's life at the bench;
12. In a growing, vital city such as Vancouver, one that is experiencing increased densification, allowances need to be made to accommodate the many different ways in which people choose to express their grief and give life to memories that honour those no longer with us.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation direct staff to investigate options to accommodate artistic enhancements to dedicated park benches under the Board's park bench dedication program, consistent with the Board's and the City's longstanding commitment to public art in its many, diverse forms, and for staff to report back to the Board by December 2019 with recommendations for expanding public art opportunities and artistic enhancement to Park Board benches; and
- B. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation direct staff to leave the bench dedicated to Colin Mackay in place on an interim basis, and work with the family on potential solutions, until Park Board Commissioners have had an opportunity to receive and consider the staff report with recommendations referenced in "A".