



July 10, 2024

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Director, Park Services

SUBJECT : **Air India Monument Maintenance – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this Board memo is to provide background information and outline recommended next steps regarding the persistent lichen staining on the Air India Memorial and other monuments located in parks.

Lichen staining has been a long-standing challenge at the Air India Memorial, with visible growth recurring for over a decade. Previous efforts, including multiple chemical treatment have yielded limited success in achieving lasting removal.

Lichen is a symbiotic organism made up of algae and fungi. While certain treatments can effectively kill the algae, the fungal component often penetrates deep into porous surfaces such as stone or concrete. As a result, complete removal is extremely difficult. Pressure washing has proven largely ineffective and can risk damaging the underlying structure without eliminating the growth.

Environmental conditions at the site, particularly moisture, shade, and material age create a highly favorable environment for lichen colonization. These conditions, coupled with the deeply embedded nature of the organism, make long-term removal complex.

We continue to consider chemical treatments as a management option, but it is important to set realistic expectations. These treatments often require multiple applications and may take 3–6 months to show visible results. Even then, full eradication is not guaranteed, and there is potential for unintended impacts on adjacent vegetation.

We will continue to explore approaches to improve the maintenance and visual appeal of these monuments within available budget constraints. This includes testing environmentally friendly biocides and, if necessary, considering more aggressive options like mechanical removal, while ensuring minimal surface damage. Any aggressive measures will be discussed with and authorized by the Decolonization, Arts and Culture Department.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amit Gandha".

Amit Gandha
Director, Park Services - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team
PB Communications