

DATE OF MEETING | March 16, 2020 |

AUTHORED BY | CHRIS SHOLBERG, COMMUNITY HERITAGE PLANNER |

SUBJECT | GREAT COAL STRIKE 1912-1914 PLAQUE PROPOSAL |

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To obtain Council approval to install a plaque in memory of the Great Coal Strike of 1912-1914 in Dallas Square (next to the “100 Years of Coal” memorial). |

Recommendation

That Council approve placement of the proposed Great Coal Strike of 1912-1914 plaque in Dallas Square (next to the “100 Years of Coal” memorial) as provided and paid for by the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre.

BACKGROUND

The City has been approached by the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre (in partnership with the Nanaimo, Duncan and District Labour Council) with a request to consider installation of a memorial plaque recognizing Vancouver Island’s Great Coal Strike of 1912-1914 (see Attachment A – B.C. Labour Heritage Centre Great Coal Strike Plaque Proposal).

The purpose of the plaque is to recognize the strike, which “turned into the most protracted, fiercely fought labour dispute in the province’s history”. Lasting just short of two years, the strike stretched from Cumberland to Ladysmith and is considered a significant influence in union recognition for miners that was reached in 1938. As part of the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre’s “Plaques Around the Province Project”, Nanaimo was chosen as the location for the plaque due to its central location and visibility.

The B.C. Labour Heritage Centre is a registered non-profit society that preserves, documents, and presents the rich history of working people in British Columbia. The society engages in partnerships and projects that help define and express the role that work and workers have played in the evolution of social policy and its impact on the present and future shaping of labour conditions in the province. |

DISCUSSION

The proposed bronze plaque will be provided free of charge to the City, and the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre will cover all the City cost’s related to the plaque’s installation in Dallas Square next to the existing “100 Years of Coal” memorial.

City Staff have reviewed the proposed plaque location and have confirmed it is a suitable site for the proposed installation. If approved by Council, Staff will coordinate installation of the plaque with the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre and reimbursement of any installation expenses. |

OPTIONS

1. That Council approve placement of the proposed Great Coal Strike of 1912-1914 plaque in Dallas Square (next to the “100 Years of Coal” memorial) as provided and paid for by the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre.
 - Advantages: Installation of the proposed plaque furthers the culture/heritage goals of the Livability strategic theme identified in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan by recognizing a key event in Nanaimo’s labour history.
 - Disadvantages: None identified.
 - Financial Implications: There are no financial implications, as the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre will pay for the plaque manufacture and installation costs.

2. That Council deny installation of the plaque in Dallas Square.
 - Advantages: None identified.
 - Disadvantages: Could be perceived as not supporting the historic struggles of miners and other labourers to have safe working conditions and fair compensation.
 - Financial Implications: None identified.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City has been approached by the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre with a request to consider installation of a memorial plaque regarding Vancouver Island’s Great Coal Strike of 1912-1914.
- The purpose of the plaque is to recognize the strike, which “turned into the most protracted, fiercely fought labour dispute in the province’s history”. Lasting just short of two years, the strike stretched from Cumberland to Ladysmith.
- The proposed bronze plaque will be provided free of charge to the City, and the B.C. Labour Heritage Centre will cover all City cost’s related to the plaque’s installation in Dallas Square next to the existing “100 Years of Coal” memorial.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: B.C. Labour Heritage Centre Great Coal Strike Plaque Proposal |

Submitted by:

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Manager, Community Planning |

Concurrence by:

Bill Corsan
Director, Community Development

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services |