

DATE OF MEETING DECEMBER 16, 2020

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SUBJECT PROPOSAL FOR WELCOME POLE AT MAFFEO SUTTON PARK

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide information to Council on a project for the installation of a Welcome Pole at Maffeo Sutton Park.

### **Recommendation**

That Council:

- a) allocate \$50,000 from Public Art budgeted in the year 2020 and 2021 for a permanent artwork at Maffeo Sutton Park to the realization of a Welcome Pole in the park by Snuneymuxw artist Noel Brown;
- b) direct Staff to collaborate with the relevant parties, including Snuneymuxw First Nation and Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre, to see this project completed in a respectful way for the benefit of our communities; and
- c) direct Staff to report back to Council with final design and location prior to installation of the artwork.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City issued the *Request for Proposals No. 2489 Call for Artists, Supply and Oversee Installation of Artwork of Maffeo Sutton Park* on 2019-OCT-25. This competition closed on 2020-JAN-20.

In early 2019, a Council-appointed Review Panel was established for RFP No. 2489. The panel consisted of four members with professional expertise in visual art, two members of City Council, and three members of Staff. Having reviewed and discussed the ten proposals received, panel members unanimously decided that none of the proposals were suitable to advance. The RFP was officially cancelled and artists who submitted were notified.

At the same time, discussions that began in 2018 about the possibility of a Welcome Pole for Maffeo Sutton Park were re-ignited. Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre has been in dialogue with the City and with Snuneymuxw Chief and Council regarding the creation of a Welcome Pole at Maffeo Sutton Park (Attachment A). The City has received two letters of support from Snuneymuxw First Nation (Attachment B). Since, noted Snuneymuxw artist Noel Brown (Attachment C), who has been identified as the lead carver, and representatives from Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre have met with the Snuneymuxw Elders Advisory Council and incorporated their feedback and teachings into the plan and design process. At a meeting of the Elders Advisory Council in late October 2020, Mr. Brown presented the design concept and it was approved.

Preliminary study has been undertaken into the site at 'Spirit Square' where the *Breaching Orca* sculpture currently resides, though further work needs to be undertaken to confirm this as an appropriate site for the installation within the park, with input from engineers.

The total project cost is estimated at \$100,000. Half of the funds have been secured by Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre, who have received a grant through Canadian Heritage. Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre has also secured a cedar log for the pole (approx. 50 feet in length) by donation from Mosaic Forest Management, and it has been delivered to the artist.

Carving is projected to take five to six months. A prospective date for completion and celebration is 2021-JUN-21 to coincide with National Indigenous Peoples' Day.

To invite input, and based on issues raised during the meeting on 2020-MAY-06, Staff corresponded with the Maffeo Art Review Panel by email to propose the concept of supporting the creation of the Welcome Pole at Maffeo Sutton Park. Each of the members responded in favour of allocating the \$50,000 planned for public art at Maffeo Sutton Park in 2020 to support the Welcome Pole project.

This project aligns with the goals and principles articulated in existing City plans, including our *Community Plan for Public Art (2010)*, *A Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo (2014-2020)*, and *Maffeo Sutton Park Master Plan*.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That Council:
  - a) allocate \$50,000 from Public Art budgeted in the year 2020 and 2021 for a permanent artwork at Maffeo Sutton Park to the realization of a Welcome Pole in the park by Snuneymuxw artist Noel Brown;
  - b) direct Staff to collaborate with the relevant parties, including Snuneymuxw First Nation and Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre, to see this project completed in a respectful way for the benefit of our communities; and
  - c) direct Staff to report back to Council with final design and location prior to installation of the artwork.
  - Advantages: The City would support a meaningful community initiative that contributes to the process of Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities; and the City would support a plan in progress and realize a higher value project by combining resources with funds already secured by project partners.
  - Disadvantages: The City would be unable to spend the \$50,000 on other art projects in 2020 at Maffeo Sutton Park; the project will involve the investment of Staff time.
  - Financial Implications: Currently \$50,000 is available in the 2020-2024 Financial Plan to fund the permanent artwork at Maffeo Sutton Park and therefore, there are no budget impacts.
2. That Council provide alternate direction.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- *Request for Proposals No. 2489 Call for Artists, Supply and Oversee Installation of Artwork of Maffeo Sutton Park* was cancelled at the recommendation of a Council-appointed Review Panel.
- There is an opportunity to use the \$50,000 allocated for permanent public art at Maffeo Sutton Park to advance a plan for a Welcome Pole created by a Snuneymuxw artist.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Letter dated 2020-OCT-29 from Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre

ATTACHMENT B: Letters dated 2018-NOV-02 and 2019-FEB-19 from Snuneymuxw First Nation

ATTACHMENT C: Artist Biography for Noel Brown

#### **Submitted by:**

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Manager, Culture & Events

#### **Concurrence by:**

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Director, Recreation & Culture

Richard Harding  
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Laura Mercer  
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