

DATE OF MEETING JUNE 15, 2022

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SUBJECT PURCHASE OF ARTWORK, SEABED, BY PETER ACHURCH

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present Council with the option to purchase the artwork *Seabed*, by Peter Achurch, and add the work to Nanaimo's Public Art Inventory.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the use of existing City funds to purchase the artwork *Seabed*, 2020, by artist Peter Achurch, and the addition of the artwork to the Public Art Inventory in 2022.

BACKGROUND

The City of Nanaimo administers the Public Art program which encourages the incorporation of public art into City owned buildings, streets, public spaces and parks. The Community Plan for Public Art guides the processes, which typically support the commissioning of works and implementation of new works in the City through community projects or donations.

The Community Plan for Public Art outlines a procedure for ad-hoc offers of artwork to the City in the form of a gift, donation, or bequest, but does not offer specific guidance on the purchase of artwork for addition to the Public Art Inventory.

Offers for sale of artwork are first considered by City Staff, then reviewed by the Art in Public Spaces Working Group, and finally brought to City Council for consideration.

The following criteria support the assessment of a donation, as outlined in the Community Plan for Public Art, and are applied to assess the merits of an artwork purchase:

- Relationship of the artwork to the cultural history of the region or site proposed
- Relationship of the artwork to the geography or specific location of the site and its surroundings
- Relevance to Nanaimo, British Columbia and/or Canada
- Consistency with site design or any heritage aspects
- Compatibility with other existing or proposed artworks, buildings, structures, etc.
- The suitability of the scale of what is proposed
- Conformity to Human Rights legislation
- Feasibility of the funding
- Considerations related to educational or interpretive signage

- Anticipated public response
- An assessment of whether the artwork contributes to, enhances or offers benefits to the site

In addition to these criteria, artworks offered for sale are also required to provide information that can guide a maintenance plan, so that the long-term impact of anticipated maintenance costs may be considered.

DISCUSSION

Seabed, by Peter Achurch, is offered for sale to the City of Nanaimo. The proposed artwork is presently on view at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre as part of the Temporary Public Art Program, 2021-2022. The proposed purchase would ensure the work remains on view and make the current display a permanent addition to the Public Art Inventory.

A detailed overview of the sale offer for this artwork is included as Attachment A.

Criteria for Purchase Consideration

Regional Context

The relationship of the artwork to the cultural history of the region, geography and City of Nanaimo, are all considered to be of high merit. The work speaks to Nanaimo as 'the Harbour City,' considering the ecology of the shoreline as both a subject and origin for the artwork. The ropes used to weave together to work have been culled from local and regional shoreline cleanup actions, and the artist addresses local awareness of the impacts of human activity on the ocean environment.

Site Design, Scale

The artwork, presently on view at Vancouver Island Conference Centre, is properly protected from the elements, publicly accessible and visible from the street. Its scale is in proportion with the space where it remains on view, and also allows for possible relocation should the option be favoured in future.

Conformity to Human Rights Legislation

The work conforms to all known human rights legislation.

Feasibility

Considered as part of the annual Public Art budget under the category 'Opportunities Arising,' the funds associated with the purchase of this artwork, \$11,000, are already accounted for in the 2022 budget. The purchase price of the work is appropriate for the size, scale and material nature of the work, and is considered to be a worthwhile asset to include in the City's Public Art Inventory. The care and maintenance needs of the work are considered minimal, and well-accounted for within the City's current operational maintenance plans.

Education / Interpretation

The work will be unique in the City's collection. It will be the sole work by Peter Achurch, and the only two-dimensional assemblage. It holds interesting potential to promote awareness of marine ecology and ocean conservation in addition to its artistic value.

Public response to the work is positive. The continued display of this work supports community enthusiasm for arts and culture as part of the daily life of Nanaimo's citizens. |

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

|With a purchase price of \$11,000 the City would secure permanent ownership of the artwork, the rights to reproduce imagery and add a valuable asset to the City's Public Art Inventory. The purchase is within budget parameters for the Public Art budget in 2022, and will have no impact on the financial plans for 2022. Long-term maintenance and care cost estimates are considered minimal. In five years the maintenance cycle plan proposed would evaluate the materials under supervision of the artist, with no anticipated need to financially invest in maintenance over the next ten years|

OPTIONS

In consideration of the direction in the Community Plan for Public Art to encourage the incorporation of public art into City owned buildings and sites, Staff recommend:

1. |That Council approve the use of existing City funds to purchase of the artwork *Seabed*, 2020, by artist Peter Achurch, and the addition of the artwork to the Public Art Inventory in 2022.
 - The advantages of this option: addition of a valued public artwork into the City's Public Art Inventory.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Staff time will be required to undertake the sale, update the Public Art Inventory, plan maintenance cycle, interpretive signage and communicate to the public.
 - Financial Implications: No impact on the 2022 budget.
2. That Council does not approve the purchase of the artwork *Seabed*, 2020, by artist Peter Achurch, and the work is removed at the end of its current display term, in August 2022.
 - The advantage of this option: Public Art funds could be directed towards another project or purpose.
 - The disadvantages of this option include the lost opportunity to secure this artwork for permanent display in Nanaimo.
 - Financial Implications: No impact on 2022 Budget

SUMMARY POINTS

- Point #1..... *Seabed*, 2020, by Peter Achurch, is proposed for purchase and addition to the Public Art Inventory in 2022.
- Point #2.....The purchase supports the Community Plan for Public Art in City buildings, streets, open spaces and parks.
- Point #3.....The purchase is accounted for as part of the Public Art budget in 2022.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Detailed Information about Offer of Sale for *Seabed* |

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