



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of August 2, 2018

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 17, 2018
From: Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation, & Facilities
Subject: Request to Install Commemorative Plaque at Irving Park

RECOMMENDATION

That Council;

1. Approve the installation of the historic plaque recognizing Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, shown in Attachment A, in Irving Park; and
2. Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a license agreement (Attachment C) with Parks Canada, with the terms to the satisfaction of the Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities, in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for Parks Canada to install a national historic plaque at Irving Park, in recognition of Mifflin Wistar Gibbs (1823-1915).

Mifflin Wistar Gibbs is a revered historical figure in the history of British Columbia, and particularly the African-Canadian community. Mifflin was the first Black person to hold elected office in B.C. as a member of Victoria City Council, and was an important advocate for the integration and rights of Black settlers in the city.

A location for the historic plaque has been identified in Irving Park, which was the site of Gibbs' former home and estate (Attachment B). The location has been reviewed and is supported by Parks Canada, City staff, representatives of the local Black community, and the James Bay Neighbourhood Association. The proposed location for this sign will be widely accessible, for residents and visitors of all abilities to enjoy.

The plaque prepared by Parks Canada contains the following text:

After helping lead the exodus of 800 Black residents from San Francisco in 1859, Gibbs became the recognized leader of their community on Vancouver Island. He strove to make these newcomers a force in colonial politics and, as a member of Victoria City Council, he became the first Black person to hold elected office in British Columbia. This innovative entrepreneur, who invested in mining and trade, also encouraged the integration of Black settlers and advocated for their rights. Though he returned to the United States in 1870, Gibbs remains a revered historical figure in the province's African-Canadian community.

Parks Canada will be responsible for all work and costs associated with the installation, as well as ongoing maintenance, in accordance with the license agreement.

As per the Parks Regulation Bylaw, installation of a commemorative plaque in a park requires Council approval. Staff recommend Council approve the location for this commemorative plaque and the associated agreement with Parks Canada.

Respectfully submitted,




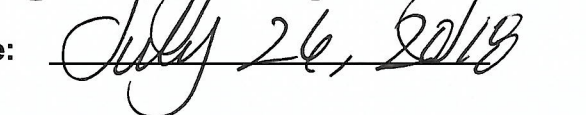
Alia Johnson
Senior Parks Planner



Thomas Soulliere
Director
Parks, Recreation & Facilities

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:

List of Attachments

- Attachment A: Photograph of Mifflin Wistar Gibbs commemorative plaque
- Attachment B: Proposed location in Irving Park
- Attachment C: Letter of Agreement