

Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of December 13, 2018

To:

Committee of the Whole

Date:

December 6, 2018

From:

Andrea Hudson, Acting Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development

Subject:

Request to Install Commemorative Plaque in Old Town

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve the request from Parks Canada to install a commemorative plaque at the intersection of Government Street, Wharf Street and Humboldt Street.

2. Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk, to execute a letter of agreement with Parks Canada.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for Parks Canada to install a commemorative plaque at the intersection of Government Street, Wharf Street and Humboldt Street to celebrate the federal designation of Old Town as a National Historic Event.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, an advisory board to the federal government, designated Old Town Victoria as a National Historic Event in 1990. This designation was pursuant to the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act R.S.C., 1985, c. H-4.* A National Historic Event is a "defining action, episode, movement or experience in Canadian history." The Board designated Old Town because "it bears testimony to the late 19th and early 20th century when Victoria was both the principal port and the commercial centre on the West Coast of Canada."

Parks Canada would now like to commemorate the event with the installation of a plaque. The installation requires approval by the City of Victoria.

BACKGROUND

Parks Canada has contacted the City of Victoria with an offer to commemorate the designation of Old Town as a National Historic Event with a plaque to be installed in a prominent public space. The plaque is bilingual, bronze, measuring 26.75" x 30.25", and will be mounted on a cut granite stone pedestal with a hammered finish (see Attachment A: Photographs). The text for the plaque is proposed as follows:

Old Town took shape during Victoria's rise to prominence in the mid-19th century, when it was an important port and commercial gateway that linked the Pacific Rim to the interior of British Columbia. It was built within the Coast Salish territory of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ

nations, on the grounds of a former Hudson's Bay Company trading post. Old Town encompasses the oldest surviving Chinatown in Canada, the waterfront warehouses and wharves that evoke the enterprise and rapid growth that followed the gold rush era, and the richly designed brick buildings that give the old commercial district an air of permanence.

ANALYSIS

Site Selection

The plaque is proposed to be located within the reconfigured plaza space that will be constructed at the intersection of Government Street, Humboldt Street and Wharf Street (Attachment B) as part of the Wharf and Humboldt All Ages and Abilities Bicycle Network project in 2019. The recommended location is supported by members of the City's Heritage Advisory Panel, since it was historically an important gateway to Old Town and a popular destination for visitors.

Parks Canada has reviewed and approved the location, which City staff proposed after consulting members of the Heritage Advisory Panel. Parks Canada will be responsible for work and costs associated with the installation, as well as for ongoing maintenance.

Official Community Plan

The recommended option is consistent with Section 16 (Arts and Culture) of the Official Community Plan.

Accessibility Impact Statement

The proposed location for this commemorative plaque does not inhibit or interfere with accessibility of the surrounding area.

2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan

The recommended option supports Objective 10: Nurture Our Arts, Culture and Learning Capital.

Impacts to Financial Plan

Parks Canada will be responsible for all costs associated with this project. There are no anticipated impacts to the Financial Plan.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed location of the new commemorative plaque is prominent, accessible, and strategically located at the main gateway to Old Town. Parks Canada will cover all costs associated with the installation and fabrication of the sign, with no financial impact to the City. Staff therefore recommend that Council approve the installation of the sign at the intersection of Government Street, Humboldt Street and Wharf Street, and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a letter of agreement with Parks Canada.

ALTERNATE MOTION

That Council decline the request for the installation of a commemorative plaque by Parks Canada.

Respectfully submitted,

John O'Reilly Heritage Planner

Community Planning Division

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Andrea Hudson, Acting Director Sustainable Planning and Community

Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager

Date: Dec 7, 2016

List of Attachments

Attachment A: Photographs of commemorative plaque example

 Attachment B: Proposed plaque location at the reconfigured intersection of Humboldt Street, Wharf Street and Government Street.

Attachment C: Draft Letter of Agreement