



## CITY OF VANCOUVER

# A4

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 31, 2008  
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RTS No.: 07239  
VanRIMS No.: 11-2600-11  
Meeting Date: April 15, 2008

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Managing Director, Cultural Services

SUBJECT: Review of City's Maritime Collections - Award of Contract

#### RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the City enter into an agreement with Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited (the "Consultant") to carry out an in-depth analysis and an independent appraisal of the City's maritime collections at a cost of \$56,825 plus GST and on such other terms as are set out in this report or considered advisable by the Director of Legal Services, in consultation with the Managing Director of Cultural Services; source of funding to be the 2008 Cultural budget.
- B. THAT no legal rights are hereby created and none shall arise until the agreement is drawn to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal Services and executed by her on behalf of the City.

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends APPROVAL of A and B.

#### COUNCIL POLICY

Council approval is required for consultancy contracts over \$30,000. Contracts are to be awarded on the basis of the best overall value to the City.

## PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

This report seeks Council approval to award a consultancy contract for an in-depth analysis and appraisal of the City's maritime collections currently held by the Vancouver Maritime Museum Society to prepare for Council's consideration the potential of a future loan, transfer and/or selected disposition of the City's maritime collections.

The Vancouver Maritime Museum Society (VMM) is an independent non-profit society which occupies a City-owned building and holds the City's collection of maritime artifacts. As a small institution, with limited financial and human resources beyond the City's annual operating support, the VMM has been seeking a more sustainable future for some time. The Museum has been working with others in the community in support of a new maritime centre in North Vancouver.

The City of North Vancouver has initiated the development of a new National Maritime Centre (NMC) and approved a rezoning to accommodate the Centre as part of a new development, "The Pier" in the Historic Shipyard District. The Province has announced support subject to confirmation of Federal participation. The concept of a regional maritime centre is strong and may be enhanced by the collocation of all or part of the City's maritime collections. The City of North Vancouver has asked the City of Vancouver to consider a loan of these collections.

## BACKGROUND

The Vancouver Maritime Museum Society occupies a City-owned building north of Hadden Park in Kits Point. In 2007, the City provided an annual operating grant in the amount of \$394,700 in addition to the use of a City-owned facility including harbour and docking facilities, all at nominal rent. As well, the City provides all janitorial, utilities and maintenance support for the facility. Further, the City provides the VMM a license to use and exhibit the collections of maritime art and artifacts which is owned by the City in trust for the people of Vancouver.

The City's maritime collections are comprised of some 150,000 artifacts in several component collections including 18,600 fine art and three dimensional artifacts, a library of some 17,000 titles, 100,000 photographs, and archival materials. A signature artifact of the collections is the RCMP vessel, *St. Roch*, which the City acquired from the Federal government in 1995.

The VMM has recognized that the status quo is not sustainable and past VMM Boards have been well aware of the challenges including low paid attendance and an accumulated deficit of approximately \$240,000 which has not changed significantly in fifteen years. The VMM has commissioned a series of studies over the years to explore the potential of moving and/or expanding the Museum as a means to a more sustainable future. Their most recent study recommended, and the VMM Board has endorsed, the concept of a new national maritime centre at a site in North Vancouver.

The concept for a new maritime centre on the north shore has been developed by the City of North Vancouver. On December 12, 2005, North Vancouver Council approved the concept of a National Maritime Centre to be located at the site of "The Pier" (Historic Shipyards precinct) in the City of North Vancouver, and in November 2006 approved a rezoning of a waterfront

site. In February, the Province of British Columbia announced its support for a new National Maritime Centre for the Pacific and the Arctic subject to Federal government participation.

The City has received a request from the City of North Vancouver to explore the potential loan or transfer of portions of the City's maritime collections, including the *St. Roch*, for use at a new National Maritime Centre.

The City's maritime collections are an important and valuable asset reflecting the City's maritime heritage. In its current location and under current operating climate, the VMM has stated that they have not been able to maximize the public benefits of this resource. The proposed NMC could achieve this public objective.

In order to provide advice to Council, and to respond to the City of North Vancouver's request, staff commissioned an independent, high-level assessment of the collections. This report concluded that the collections have primarily a regional and local focus with some individual artifacts of provincial and national significance which were deemed to be outstanding, most notably the RCMP patrol schooner, *St. Roch*. Further, the consultants noted the coherency and interconnectivity of the collections. At the same time, they also noted that there were objects of little or no historic relevance, duplication of artifacts, and some which could better be housed with alternate institutions.

Staff are now recommending a detailed review of all artifacts by an independent consultant team with expertise in maritime history to categorise them into four areas:

- Core maritime collection – artifacts of the highest historical significance that form the base of the regional maritime collection, including the vessel, *St Roch*;
- Ancillary maritime collection – artifacts which have relevance to, but are not integral to the core maritime collection;
- Vancouver non-maritime collection – artifacts which have historical significance to Vancouver but are not ancillary to the core collection;
- Deaccession/Disposal – objects without relevance to Vancouver and/or with little or no historic significance, or duplicates of artifacts already identified for the core or ancillary collections.

Further, artifacts in each category will need to be documented and appraised. In the case of the core and ancillary maritime collections, this work is preparatory to any discussion of a potential loan of the collections. In the case of the non-maritime collection, it is essential to determine if items should be transferred to other Vancouver collecting institutions such as the Vancouver Museum, Vancouver Archives or Vancouver Public Library, or deaccessioned. Any potential loans, transfers or deaccessioning would only be considered where the proposal meets or exceeds the British Columbia Museums Association Collections Standards and all significant loans, transfers or deaccessions would be reported to City Council for approval.

## DISCUSSION

In January 2008, staff sought expressions of interest from consultants for the in-depth analysis and appraisal of the City's maritime collections currently held by the VMM, as well as the development of a deaccessions plan. The EOI was circulated to thirteen pre-qualified consultants with specific expertise in the areas of museum collections and/or maritime history.

Two submissions were received and reviewed by a selection committee comprised of the Managing Director of Cultural Services, a Cultural Planner from the Office of Cultural Affairs and the Executive Director of the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

Using a comparative and consistent evaluation matrix, the submissions were reviewed for experience with collections analysis, appraisals and deaccessioning, knowledge and expertise of maritime history of Vancouver and the region, development of collection policies, practices and standards, methodology and cost. Proponents were scored out of a total of 100 points. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with both proponent teams using a consistent set of questions related to the above criteria. Based on this evaluation, the selection committee determined that the proposal from Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited (CHRM) was most able to fulfill all the project objectives and goals.

Staff recommend that CRHM be retained to complete the detailed analysis and categorization process, and to professionally appraise those items in the four collection areas, and then to develop a deaccessions plan. Commonwealth Historic Resource Management's project budget is \$56,825 plus GST including all disbursements.

Subject to Council approval, the collections analysis will commence May 1, 2008 and be completed by September 15, 2008. The analysis, appraisals and deaccessions plan prepare the City to plan for future options for the collections including the potential loan to the City of North Vancouver for the purpose of a new maritime centre.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost associated with the independent analysis and appraisal of the collections held by the VMM to facilitate the valuation, itemization and transfer of the City's maritime collections is estimated at \$56,825 plus GST; source of funds to be funds approved in 2007 (RTS#06953) and carried forward to the 2008 Cultural Budget.

## CONCLUSION

The recommendation contained in this report provides the necessary preparatory work for the City to be able to respond to, and plan for future options for the City's valuable maritime collections.

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