

Date: February 6, 2009



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale

RECOMMENDATION

- A. *THAT, with the written permission of the Vancouver Park Board, some of the temporarily installed sculptures remain on park land beyond the originally agreed on 18 month period but not beyond September 2015 and;***
- B. *THAT, with the written permission of the Vancouver Park Board, sculptures which are removed after one exhibition may return as part of a subsequent exhibition. That all sculptures temporarily installed be removed by September 2015 as per the existing agreement.***

POLICY

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation adopted the *Arts Policy and Recommendations* in November 1993 and a renewed *Arts Policy* in December 2003. The *Arts Policy* states that the Park Board provides a vibrant public realm and supports the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.

In 1988, the Park Board adopted the *Acceptance Guidelines for Long-Term Gifts of Public Art* and in 1997 the Board adopted the *Guidelines for the Review of Proposed Donations of Public Art and/or Memorials to City-Wide Parks*. These guidelines are designed to ensure that high quality artwork and memorials of significance to a broad cross-section of Vancouver residents can be added to Vancouver's public spaces; and that community response is included in the considerations for the location of the works. The core principle of these policies and processes is shared decision-making.

The Park Board controls and approves the use of park land and park facilities. When artworks are proposed for sites under their jurisdiction, the Park Board ascertains that Park Board processes and policies were properly implemented and makes its decision based on the results of technical analysis conducted by staff, consultation with the public, and the aesthetic and artistic merit as assessed by arts and design professionals.

BACKGROUND

In February 1998 the Board approved a proposal from the Buschlen Mowatt Foundation for “the installation of a temporary sculpture exhibit in Devonian Harbour Park and along the seawall between English Bay and Sunset Beach, from May through October, 1998”.

Based on evaluation submitted as “Background” in a report dated January 14, 1999, a second temporary exhibition was approved. Subsequent exhibitions were approved and held in 2000 and 2002/03.

In 2004 the Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale was incorporated as a registered not-for profit and charitable foundation. Current president and founder, Barrie Mowatt manages the sculpture exhibits in conjunction with the governing board of the Biennale.

DISCUSSION

Based on Arts Policy objectives and the high level of acceptance of past temporary exhibitions, the Park Board entered into an Agreement with the Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale for a series of temporary sculpture exhibitions to take place “during and throughout the period of ten (10) years beginning July 25, 2005”.

The terms of the Agreement set out in section 4 state that:

- there would be six exhibitions of 18 months and one of 12 months duration (4.a);
- all sculpture installations would be subject to the approval of the Park Board, 4.c.iii);
- once approved there would be no change to the sculptures or their siting and all sculptures would be removed within 60 days of the completion of each exhibition (4.b);
- the initial 2005 exhibition involved 17 sites in 10 different parks (Appendix 1);
- while the number and location of sites was not fixed for subsequent exhibitions, the Board could at any time by written notice, limit the number of sites (4.g).

At the time of this Agreement there was no anticipation of the permanent installation of the sculptures on park land and it was on this basis that processes were developed for the approval of the works and their siting. The established processes governing the acceptance of donations of works of art for long-term installation were abbreviated based on the temporary (defined in the Agreement as no more than 18 months) nature of these installations. The processes designed for these temporary exhibitions include; the usual technical and risk analysis of the artworks and the sites; public response as determined by response to previous exhibitions; aesthetic and artistic merit as assessed by the Biennale’s professional curatorial staff.

At the Park Board meeting of March 31, 2008 staff were directed to consult with the public on a proposal from the Biennale Foundation that some of the temporarily installed sculptures remain on park land beyond the originally agreed on 18 month period but not beyond September 2015.

As a result a consultation process was implemented in April and May 2008, including:

- consultation with the Public Art Committee;
- signage was posted at the revised 16 Biennale sites requesting feedback over a three week period (Appendix 2);
- notices were posted in the nearest public facilities, notification of appropriate stakeholders via email;
- notices were distributed in a two-block radius of the sites by the Vancouver Biennale Foundation;
- a single quarter page ad was run in the *Vancouver Sun* weekend edition;
- notice of the consultation was posted on the Park Board public website;
- a public meeting was held at the West End Community Centre; and
- all costs incurred by the review were paid by the Biennale, including on-site signage.

Response to the consultation was mixed.

The Public Art Committee expressed their support in general for the Vancouver Biennale however they recommended that if longer term loans were to be considered that there is a clear review process which would be applied on a case by case basis.

Response from the public consultation regarding the specific questions of longer siting and returning installations (with written permission of the Park Board) was largely positive: 107 in favour and 31 against longer siting; 103 in favour and 29 against returning works; and 31 responses which did not address either question (Appendix 3).

SUMMARY

Based on the level of positive response to the consultation, staff recommends that, with the written permission of the Park Board, sculptures installed as part of one of the Vancouver Biennale's temporary exhibitions may remain in their existing locations. In addition, with the written permission of the Park Board, sculptures which are removed after one exhibition may return as part of a subsequent exhibition, and that all sculptures temporarily installed, be removed by September 2015 as per the existing agreement.

Prepared by:

Stanley District
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC

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