

NO: R253

COUNCIL DATE: December 18, 2017

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **December 14, 2017**  
FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** FILE: **7800-01**  
SUBJECT: **Recommendation for Port Kells Community Hall Public Art Project**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Authorize staff to undertake a contract and work with the artist, Bruce Walther, towards the creation and installation of a mosaic proposal on the north facade of Port Kells Community Hall as generally described in this report.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with background information regarding the opportunity for public art for the Port Kells Centennial Hall and to obtain Council approval for staff to retain an artist to undertake a mosaic artwork for this facility.

## BACKGROUND

The recommendation for staff to proceed with a public art opportunity at the Port Kells Community Hall was informed by a series of meetings with the Port Kells Community Association and was supported unanimously by the Public Art Advisory Committee March 2, 2017.

Residents and members of the Port Kells Community Association provided recommendations including defining the public art's purpose to make the entrance to the building welcoming, meaningful, and represent the Port Kells neighbourhood. Residents recommended the theme for the artwork to be the neighbourhood's natural and human heritage. The location for the public art on the north façade of the building was confirmed as suitable by Civic Facilities staff.

This report has been prepared as the artist Mari Gardner who was originally recommended, and supported by Council to produce an artwork for the Port Kells Community Hall, withdrew amicably from the competition (see Corporate Report R166; 2017 in Appendix "I").

## **DISCUSSION**

An open call was extended to professional artists and posted on BC Bid, on the City's Opportunities for Business webpage, on the City's Public Art Opportunities for Artists' web page and through the City's public art e-newsletter.

A Selection Panel (the "Panel") was convened to evaluate the submissions and make recommendations to the Public Art Advisory Committee on both a shortlist of artists, and the final design proposal.

When the recommended artist withdrew, the Public Art Advisory Committee, informed by a report on the consultation with the Port Kells Community Association, supported commissioning the second choice from the original competition, artist Bruce Walther, to create new proposals for consideration by the original selection panel members.

On November 24, 2017, Bruce Walther presented three different proposals to Selection Panel members including Port Kells Residents: Alexandra Sandvoss, Mary Anne Wilcox and Elsie Preedy.

Public Art Advisory Committee Representative Celeste Snowber, City staff, Liane Davison and Hossam Meawad, were also present at the meeting and facilitated discussion. The Panel voted unanimously to recommend Bruce Walther be commissioned to create "The Keltic" design proposal.

### **Public Art Advisory Committee Endorsement**

At its meeting on December 07, 2017, the Public Art Advisory Committee unanimously recommended that the General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture prepare a report to Council recommending the selected artist, Bruce Walther, for the Port Kells Community Hall public art commission.

### **About the Artist**

Bruce Walther is a professional artist who has completed numerous glass and mosaic public art commissions for various municipalities throughout the Lower Mainland and as far away as Winnipeg, Manitoba. Recent projects include three sidewalk mosaics representing the history and culture of the City of New Westminster. He also created a glass rainwater feature mosaic at the entrance to the Queensborough Community Centre. When not working on art projects, Bruce supports himself as a tile setter and as a marine glazer.

### **About the Concept and Materials**

The theme of the artwork is centred on the name of the neighbourhood: Port Kells. The intricate knot work pattern serving as background for "The Keltic" mosaic design was inspired by research on the Kells Brothers, first settlers of the neighbourhood, and recalls imagery from the Book of Kells, a renowned medieval illuminated manuscript. The design represents the natural and human heritage of Port Kells through imagery super-imposed on the patterned background. The artwork celebrates the logging history through imagery of the saw blade and Old Curly logging train that used to work the railway along Harvey Road in the 1890's. It also honours the agricultural and natural history with the inclusion of a salmon berry, which is indigenous to the neighbourhood, and horse riding, which is still practiced in parts of the neighbourhood. Featured in the centre, is a Coho salmon and paddle wheeler to represent past activities along the Fraser River, such as fishing and transportation

that contributed to the flourishing of Port Kells as a community. Some of the images are silhouetted to facilitate readability of the artwork. (see Appendix “II”)

The artwork will be created in three sections of glass mosaic and backed by ¾” plywood and ¼” cement board. The glass mosaic will be installed on this cement board with thinset mortar and an acrylic admix. The mosaic will be grouted with a premium grout and sealed with a silicone sealer to protect the grout from absorbing stains.

The artwork will be subject to a technical review to ensure it will be robust to endure for a minimum of 50-years and to be both graffiti resistant and theft proof.

### **Policy Considerations**

The recommendation of this report complies with the City’s Public Art Policy. The implementation of the public art project is guided by the Public Art Master Plan, which identifies this location as a priority for public art investment.

### **FUNDING**

Total funding for the Port Kells Hall Public Art is \$30,000 and draws equally from the City’s public art funds generated by the construction budgets of civic infrastructure as well as contributions to the private development public art fund for Guildford. Of this budget, \$20,000 is assigned to the artist contract for this project, inclusive of all costs and taxes. The remaining funds will be reserved for the ongoing maintenance reserve for this artwork and the cost of administering the competition, signage and other costs.

### **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The public art mural will assist in meeting the following desired outcomes contained within the Charter Sub-themes of “Neighbourhoods and Urban Design”:

- DO 1: “Surrey is compromised with distinct, diverse and compact town centres with an engaging public realm”;
- DO 8: “The built environment enhances quality of life, happiness and well-being”; and
- DO 15: “All new buildings, public places and outdoor spaces are welcoming, safe and universally accessible”.

The public art mural supports the Community Theme of “Education and Culture” identified in the City’s Sustainability Charter:

- DO 7: “An enviable and vibrant arts and heritage sector contributes to Surrey’s citizen engagement, enrichment, economy, community livability and civic pride”; and
- DO 10: “Surrey celebrates, protects and promotes its natural and built heritage sites”.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council recommend staff proceed with the process to contract the recommended artist for the Port Kells Community Hall public art project as generally described in this report. Should Council approve, it is expected that the artist will begin in January 2018 and conclude with the final design and installation of an artwork by summer 2018.

Laurie Cavan  
General Manager,  
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Appendix "I" - Corporate Report R166; 2017 - Recommendation for Port Kells Community Hall  
Public Art Project  
Appendix "II" - Artwork Location and Concept Design by Bruce Walther



## CORPORATE REPORT

NO: R166

COUNCIL DATE: July 24, 2017

**REGULAR COUNCIL**

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **July 19, 2017**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks Recreation & Culture** FILE: **2320-02**

SUBJECT: **Recommendation for Port Kells Community Hall Public Art Project**

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Authorize staff to undertake a contract and work with the artist, Mari Gardner, towards the creation and installation of a mosaic proposal on the north facade of Port Kells Hall as generally described in this report.

**BACKGROUND**

The proposal to commission a new public artwork for Port Kells Community Hall was initiated due to the metal theft of the copper sculpture, *Growth*, which had been mounted on the north facade of the building for several decades. The recommendation for staff to proceed with a public art opportunity at the Port Kells Community Hall was supported unanimously by the Public Art Advisory Committee March 2, 2017.

Two opportunities for feedback from residents regarding this public art opportunity were conducted by public art staff as part of the Port Kells Community Association quarterly meetings. Residents provided recommendations including defining its purpose to make the entrance to the building welcoming, meaningful, and represent the Port Kells neighbourhood, reflected in Appendix "I". Residents recommended the theme for the artwork: the neighbourhood's natural and human heritage. The location for the public art on the north facade of the building was confirmed as suitable by Civic Facilities staff.

**Policy Considerations**

The recommendation of this report complies with the City's *Public Art Policy*. The implementation of the public art project is guided by the Public Art Master Plan, which identifies this location as a priority for public art investment.

## DISCUSSION

### **Selection Process**

An open call was extended to professional artists and posted on BC Bid, on the City's Opportunities for Business webpage, and the City's Public Art Opportunities for Artists' web page and through the city's public art e-newsletter. A selection panel to evaluate the submissions was convened and included the following:

#### Selection Panel Members

- Nicoletta Baumeister, Surrey Artist;
- Alexandra Sandvoss, Port Kells Community Representative; and
- Mary Anne Wilcox, Port Kells Community Representative.

#### Non-Voting Panel Members/Advisors

- Elsie Preedy, Director of Port Kells Community Association;
- Celeste Snowber, Public Art Advisory Committee Representative;
- Liane Davison, Manager of Visual and Community Art (Chair); and
- Hossam Meawad, Public Art Intern.

On June 9, 2017, EOI submissions from artists were reviewed by the Artist Selection Panel, (the "Panel"). As a result of this process, the Panel unanimously voted to shortlist three artists for the developing of a competition proposal:

- Mari Gardner;
- Connie Glover; and
- Bruce Walther.

On June 12, 2017, an information meeting and site visit was held to review the artwork location; community context and values; and expectations. A resident of the Port Kells neighbourhood provided an introduction on the location, surroundings, and history of the area.

On July 5, 2017, submissions from shortlisted artists and presentations of competition proposals were reviewed by the Artist Selection Panel. As a result of this process, the Panel unanimously voted to recommend to the Public Art Advisory Committee the artist, Mari Gardner, for this commission.

### **Public Art Advisory Committee Endorsement**

At its meeting on July 6, 2017 the Public Art Advisory Committee received the selection panel's unanimous recommendation, and in turn voted unanimously to recommend Council request staff to proceed with contracting artist Mari Gardner to produce this artwork.

## **About the Artist**

Mari Gardner is an architectural mosaic artist with a background in sculpture, photography and community based-art. She has worked throughout the United States, Brazil and Swaziland to create mosaics, sculptures, participatory films and photographs; both commission based and community art based. The inspiration for her art is rooted in the intersection of people, culture, nature and design. Her public works are created to be site specific; abstractly telling the story of the location's history, purpose and natural beauty while offering a reflective space for thoughts and meditations. Mari has substantial experience with both interior and exterior mosaic art for clients that include the following: the Hilton Hotel, the American Embassy, the American Visionary Art Museum and The Glazer Children's Museum. The artist also crafts private commissions for smaller businesses and homes. As a medium, Mari works with river stones, stained glass, recycled bottles/glass pieces, blown glass, Venetian plaster, sand, and a variety of mixed media. Mari has 15 years of experience as an independent art contractor working harmoniously with art consultants, building contractors, architects, NGO's, community boards and community members.

## **About the concept**

*"History is a river that never ends. Today is history, and I am here at the fountainhead"* is a quote by Wilbur Smith, a novelist from South Africa, that inspired Mari in making her competition proposal. Mari thought in creating the design was to use the form of the Fraser River as the storyboard. As an essential element within the history of Port Kells, Mari feels that the river is a suitable metaphor to tell the story of the people and the place. The silhouetted imagery is a narrative of those that lived/live in Port Kells, as well as the history of transportation and the importance of the river. The fish would be drawings into fused glass. The canoe, child fishing, trees, ferryboat and train would be made from stainless steel, painted black. The stainless cut outs will project off the surface, floating just above the hand cut stained glass backdrop.

The mural is projected to cover approximately 93 square feet. It is expected to be built in three (3) parts and attached to the wall using French cleats and secured with brackets. The materials to be used include hand cut stained glass (sunset/sky backdrop), fused glass (river), river stones (edging), and stainless steel (images). The mosaic will be grouted and sealed and coated for anti-graffiti and secured. The artwork design concept is reflected as Appendix "II".

## **FUNDING**

Total funding for the Port Kells Hall Public Art is \$30,000 and draws from both civic monies as well as contributions to the private development public art fund for Guildford. Of this budget, \$20,000 is assigned to the artist contract for this project, inclusive of all costs and taxes. 10% of the total is maintenance reserve, 15% of the total is administration fees, and the remaining is the City's contingency. Subject to Council approval of the recommendations of this report, it is expected that the artist will begin in August 2017 and conclude with the final design and installation of an artwork by October 2017.

## SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The public art mural will assist in meeting the following desired outcomes contained within the Charter Sub-themes of “Neighbourhoods and Urban Design:

- DO 1: Surrey is compromised with distinct, diverse and compact town centres with an engaging public realm;
- DO 8: The built environment enhances quality of life, happiness and well-being; and
- DO 15: All new buildings, public places and outdoor spaces are welcoming, safe and universally accessible.

The public art mural supports the Community Theme of “Education and Culture identified in the City’s Sustainability Charter:

- DO 7: An enviable and vibrant arts and heritage sector contributes to Surrey’s citizen engagement, enrichment, economy, community livability and civic pride; and
- DO 10: Surrey celebrates, protects and promotes its natural and built heritage sites.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council recommend staff proceed with the process to contract the recommended artist for the Port Kells Community Hall public art project as generally described in this report.

Laurie Cavan  
General Manager,  
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Appendix “I” - Artwork Location

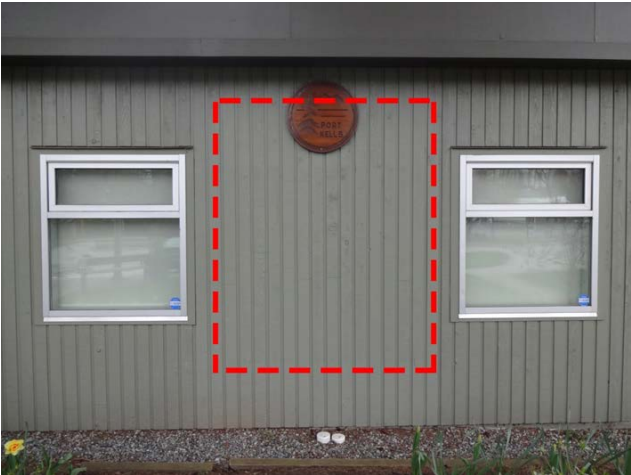
Appendix “II” – Rendering of Competition Concept by Mari Gardner



Artwork Location



Aerial view of Port Kells Hall and surroundings



Rendering of Competition Concept by Mari Gardner



*Approximate location of proposed artwork*



## APPENDIX "II"

Artwork Location and Concept Design by Bruce Walther  
On the North Façade of Port Kells Community Hall

