

NOTICE OF MOTION**Renaming the Russell Hill Parkette “Robert Bateman Parkette”****Moved by: Councillor Michael Walker** _____**Seconded by: Councillor Joe Mihevc** _____**SUMMARY:**

Robert Bateman is a well accomplished Canadian naturalist and painter, born and raised in the City of Toronto. From a very early age he was a very keen naturalist, inspired by the works of the Group of Seven, he transferred his local landscape to wonderful works of art.

Robert Bateman credits living along the Belt Line ravine at an early age as a major influence on his life as a naturalist and an artist. At the age of 6, Bateman and his family moved into a house that his uncle built at 287 Chaplin Crescent. Its backyard sloped down to the Belt Line ravine, which provided the budding naturalist with a lavish abundance of plants and animals.

Many of Robert Bateman’s early pieces of art reflected the plants, animals and landscapes discovered along the belt line ravine. In his current home in British Columbia, Bateman proudly has hanging a painting he did of the birds in the backyard of his childhood home when he was 14 years old.

Bateman graduated from Victoria College at the University of Toronto, in 1954 and attended the Ontario College of Education. As a high school art and geography teacher, Robert Bateman continued to paint, and eventually in the in 1970’s and early 1980’s his work began to receive world wide critical acclaim and a very large following. He had many one-man exhibitions that brought out record breaking crowds, including an exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC in 1987.

Robert Bateman has since received many awards and honours’; including the Queen’s Jubilee Medal, the Order of British Columbia and is an Officer of the Order of Canada. There are three schools named after him, in Ottawa, Burlington and Abbotsford British Columbia.

While he now lives in Saltspring Island BC, Robert Bateman still feels very strongly for the preservation and protection of the Belt Line ravine, one of 24 ravines throughout the City of Toronto. These ravines are the defining natural feature of this City, and provide many budding naturalists, like a young Robert Bateman, an opportunity to explore and be inspired nature.

The Russell Hill Parkette near his old home on Chaplin Crescent is one of the gateways for local residents and visitors to enter the Kay Gardiner Belt Line ravine, and is an appropriate site to celebrate the connection the ravine has had on our culture through Robert Bateman.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Toronto and East York Community Council:

1. Direct the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back to the May 25th, 2010 Toronto and East York Community Council on the renaming of Russell Hill Parkette to “Robert Bateman Parkette”
2. That the that the Mayor be requested to officiate at an official plaque dedication ceremony at the Russell Hill Parkette to recognize the impact the Kay Gardiner Belt Line Ravine has had on Robert Bateman’s artwork.