

Donation of Memorial Sculpture for Nathan Phillips Square to Commemorate Fallen Canadian Soldiers in WWII Italian Campaign

Date:	October 18, 2011
To:	Government Management Committee
From:	Chief Corporate Officer
Wards:	
Reference Number:	P:\2011\Internal Services\Fac\Gm11016Fac - (AFS 14551)

SUMMARY

This report briefly describes a proposal from a group of Torontonians to donate to the City of Toronto and install at Nathan Phillips Square (NPS), a memorial sculpture to commemorate the Canadian soldiers who fought and lost their lives in the WWII Italian campaign. While the design of the sculpture is still to be determined, the report recommends that the northwest area of NPS be approved as the prospective location for the donated sculpture, as long as certain conditions are met. The City's early approval of this prominent location will enhance the donor group's private fundraising efforts planned to commence shortly, and allow the artists competing for this commission to develop concepts that are specific to this prominent and significant site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Corporate Officer recommends that:

1. City Council approve the northwest area of Nathan Phillips Square as the prospective location for the donation of the proposed memorial sculpture commemorating fallen Canadian soldiers in the WWII Italian campaign, on the condition that the donor group complies with the process and conditions outlined in this report.

2. The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, in consultation with the City Clerk and Executive Director, Facilities Management report back to the Economic Development Committee once the donor group has selected the final sculpture design for donation to the City of Toronto.
3. The appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications to the City related to the acceptance of this donated sculpture. The donor group will undertake private fundraising to fully fund this project. The group has established a project budget of \$250,000 to cover all costs associated with commissioning the sculpture, including design, supply and fabrication of the artwork, site preparation and landscaping, sculpture installation, and artists and sub-consultant fees. In addition, the donor group is aware of the City's requirement that the group commit a cash sum, equal to 10% of the sculpture's gross construction cost, towards future maintenance and conservation of the sculpture.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on October 2, 3 and 4, 2001, Toronto City Council adopted a policy that outlines the process to be followed when an individual or organization offers to donate to the City of Toronto, an official gift of public art, a commemoration, or the installation of a public tribute or major public recognition. To ensure the integrity of the process, criteria developed by Cultural Services for reviewing such donations were also adopted at that time.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In accordance with the City's approved process, the donor group submitted a letter to the Chief of Protocol (see Attachment 1), which outlines the proposal to donate to the City of Toronto a memorial sculpture commemorating the Canadian soldiers who fought and lost their lives in the WWII Italian campaign, and identifies NPS as the requested location for the sculpture. The submission briefly describes the project, donor group, funding, process for selecting the artist, and rationale for the preferred location. It states that 93,000 Canadian soldiers fought in this campaign and 6,000 lost their lives. It explains that, while this contribution and sacrifice of Canadian troops is recognized by many

statues and plaques in Europe, such recognition is lacking in Canada, which this project proposes to rectify.

The commissioning of this commemorative sculpture in Toronto is a Villa Charities project. It is spearheaded by a group of private citizens, which has formed a committee comprised of prominent Torontonians including Senator Consiglio Di Nino. The project is to be fully funded through private fundraising.

The committee will undertake a two-stage artwork competition for this project. As noted in the donor group's submission letter to the City, in the second stage, a selected group of 4 to 6 artists will be tasked with developing proposals for the memorial artwork which "... will complement the existing installations". It also states that..."the committee would like to respectfully suggest that a location in the North West corner of the revitalized Nathan Phillips Square would do justice to the theme, to the Canadian soldiers and to the location. The title of this project is 'Peace through Valour', a theme which resonates with both the Winston Churchill Statue and the Peace Garden".

COMMENTS

Proposed Location for Sculpture Installation

The donor group is requesting that the sculpture be located in the northwest area of NPS. An important consideration in the City's acceptance of a donation is that there should be no conditions from the donor attached to the donation. For instance, while a preferred location may be suggested, it cannot be a condition of the City's acceptance of the gift. In this instance, the donor group is requesting the City's early approval of this prominent site for the donated sculpture, because this approval will greatly assist the donor group in its private fundraising efforts planned to commence shortly.

City staff are of the view that it is appropriate to locate the proposed sculpture in the northwest area of NPS as shown on the site plan attached (see Attachment 2). However, the City's approval of this location should be conditional upon the donor group following Cultural Services' commissioning process as outlined in this report, for which precedent can be found in the City's own commissioning procedures.

With the revitalization of NPS currently underway, the northwest area of the site will undergo some improvements. Upgrades to the existing children's playground located in this area have already been completed. The existing Winston Churchill statue now located in the southwest area of the site facing Queen Street West will also be relocated to this area by the end of 2012. As well, the Peace Garden previously located in the middle of the square will be relocated nearby in the western landscaped area of NPS by mid 2012.

Thus, it is necessary that the donor group incorporate the site context into its RPF document that will be provided to the shortlisted artists. As the prospective site for the sculpture will be in close proximity to the Winston Churchill statue, children's playground and Peace Garden, this setting must be factored into the artwork concept, content and orientation.

Further, through the RFP process, the sculpture proposals will be required to conform to the volume and footprint specified by Facilities Management staff in consultation with the NPS Revitalization project architect. The RFP document will also ask the artists to consider and incorporate the design mandate of the NPS Revitalization Project, which:

"respects and restores the beauty and dignity of architect Viljo Revell's original vision, while preserving and enhancing the Square's unique heritage qualities and.... reintroduce it as a more functional and environmentally sustainable meeting place for future generations...It is a place where people come together in the spirit of openness, community and democracy".

Process to Accept Donation of Sculpture

A staff committee comprised of representatives from the City Clerk's Office/Protocol Services, Economic Development and Culture/Cultural Services and Facilities Management has reviewed the original submission document (Attachment 1).

Cultural Services provides advice in dealing with artistic gifts and commemorations to the City of Toronto, so that City staff can ensure the inclusion of appropriate professional arts community expertise in the evaluation process. Cultural Services requires that prospective artwork donors address the two main guiding principles that govern the City's own public art commissioning process, namely that:

- the opportunity for the commission is made open to more than one artist through a competitive process; and
- the artwork concept is selected by a committee that includes a majority of arts professionals and representation from the local community.

This means that the donor group must commit to administering a competition process for the selection of the artist and design, a process through which Cultural Services staff will advise the donor group, and ensure that specific criteria are addressed in the development of the artwork concept. In addition, the donor group must commit a cash sum, equal to 10% of the artwork's gross construction cost, towards future maintenance and conservation of the artwork.

Upon selection of an artwork concept, the donor group and selected artist will be required to work with Cultural Services staff on design development of the selected artwork concept to ensure durability of materials, finishes and installation method.

At the appropriate time, City staff will submit a report to the Economic Development Committee and City Council, with a recommendation of acceptance of the gift by the City of Toronto or not. If the decision is favorable, City staff will work out the installation details with the donor group or their designate.

CONCLUSION

This report recommends that the northwest area of NPS be approved as the prospective location for the proposed sculpture to be donated to the City of Toronto, on the condition that the donor group complies with the process and conditions outlined in this report. The City's early approval of this prominent location will enhance the donor group's private fundraising efforts planned to commence shortly, and enable the competing artists for this commission to develop concepts that are specific to this important site.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Bruce Bowes, P.Eng.
Chief Corporate Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Letter dated October 12, 2011 from Barbara Boraks
Attachment 2 – Proposed Location for Sculpture Donation: Nathan Phillips Square
Site Plan