



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Toronto Fire Services – Fireboat Naming

Date:	June 9, 2015
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Fire Chief and General Manager, Fire Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	p:\2015\ClusterB\FIR\cd150016

SUMMARY

In November 2014, Toronto Fire Services (TFS) acquired a decommissioned vessel from the Canadian Coast Guard, which will act as a backup vessel to the current fireboat "William Lyon Mackenzie". This report recommends that the name "William Thornton" be approved to identify the newly acquired TFS fireboat.

The proposed name, "William Thornton" has historical significance to Toronto Fire Services and the City of Toronto as the death of William Thornton in 1848 was recorded as the first fallen firefighter in Toronto and also the first in Ontario.

Community Councils have delegated authority to decide naming matters which comply with the City of Toronto Honourific and Street Naming Policy. Given that the fireboat services the city's entire shoreline, this matter is being reported to the Community Development and Recreation Committee for referral to City Council.

Although the City of Toronto Honourific and Street Naming Policy requires that informed written consent of the named party or the named party's representative be obtained prior to City Council approval, it is not feasible to do so in this case as William Thornton died over 130 years ago.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Chief & General Manager, Fire Services recommends that City Council:

1. Approve the name "William Thornton" for the new fireboat.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The City of Toronto Honourific and Street Naming Policy can be accessed at the following link:

http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Engineering%20and%20Construction%20Services/Engineering%20Information/Files/pdf/Street%20Naming%20Related%20Policies/Street_Naming_Policy_Dec2013.pdf

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In November 2014, Toronto Fire Services (TFS) acquired a decommissioned vessel, "Cape Hurd" from the Canadian Coast Guard. The Coast Guard has retained the name. The vessel will replace the current back-up vessel, "Sora", obtained from the Coast Guard in 2006.

TFS staff researched potential names for the fireboat including short-listed names considered when the name "William Lyon Mackenzie" was selected in 1963. TFS also consulted with Toronto historians, staff of the TFS Marine Unit as well as City Staff from Museums and Heritage Services, and the Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Office.

The proposed name, "William Thornton" has historical significance to the Toronto Fire Services and the City of Toronto. In 1848, Thornton was a firefighter in Toronto and was seriously injured when he responded to a fire on November 22. He succumbed to his injuries two days later. His death was recorded as the first fallen firefighter in Toronto and the first in Ontario.

Thornton's body remained in an unmarked grave in St. James Cemetery until 2003, when TFS placed a grave marker over his final resting place, formally marking the grave of Toronto's first fallen firefighter.

COMMENTS

Community Councils have delegated authority to decide naming matters which comply with the City of Toronto Honourific and Street Naming Policy. Given that the fireboats service the city's entire shoreline, this matter is being reported to the Community Development and Recreation Committee for referral to City Council.

Although the City of Toronto Honourific and Street Naming Policy requires that informed written consent of the named party or the named party's representative be obtained prior to City Council approval, it is not feasible to do so in this case as William Thornton died over 130 years ago. To our knowledge, TFS has not had any contact from representatives of William Thornton's estate.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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