



Joe Cressy
City Councillor | Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina

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May 16, 2018

Government Management Committee
100 Queen Street West, Toronto City Hall
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

Re: Selection of Ireland Park Foundation for the Establishment of an arts and heritage destination in the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood

The Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Plan (BQNP) was adopted by City Council in July 2017. Since adoption of the plan, I have been pleased to work closely with City staff and community stakeholders on the development of an implementation strategy to begin delivering the 'near-term' (i.e. 1-5 year delivery) community improvement projects contained in the overall plan. These six distinct but overlapping improvement projects include:

- a transformation of the under-utilized Canada Malting Property with brand new public spaces for community-focused and special waterfront events, and improved connections to the water's edge;
- the construction of expanded, safe and welcoming pedestrian spaces on Eireann Quay;
- a rehabilitated channel dockwall to improve access to Ireland Park and the water's edge;
- enhancements to the appearance of the Canada Malting silos (while continuing to pursue a viable, long-term remediation strategy for these important structures);
- improvements in the management of area parking and transportation pressures; and,
- the revitalization of the City-owned Administration Building with a new arts, community and culturally-focused destination on the waterfront.

With respect to the latter proposal, it is my pleasure to recommend the non-profit Ireland Park Foundation as a partner for the revitalization of the Administration Building with a new arts and heritage destination in the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood.

The City-owned, three-storey Administration Building at 5 Eireann Quay occupies a remarkable waterfront location adjacent to Ireland Park. The building is presently under-utilized and in a poor state of repair, with recent state-of-good repair estimates ranging from approximately \$2.0-million to \$3.0 million. Per recommendations contained in the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Plan, the building is planned for transformation into an arts, community and/or culturally-focused community hub.

The Ireland Park Foundation, a non-profit arts, culture and heritage organization, has an established partnership with the City of Toronto and other city-building agencies to program cultural events and improve public open spaces within the City. As part of its mission to "celebrate the story of Irish in Canada", in 2007 the Foundation constructed Ireland Park immediately adjacent to the Administration Building. Recently, the Foundation broke ground on the construction of Grasett Park, a new public space being built in the city's Entertainment District.

Related to their ongoing investment and programming at Ireland Park, the Foundation also has a long-standing interest in the Administration Building. Shortly after the construction of Ireland Park, a 2009 City staff report recommended that as part of area redevelopment options then under study, the "...*opportunity exists for the City to work with the Ireland Park Foundation to lease and renovate the (Administration Building) as a Cultural Centre that could support interpretation of Ireland Park along with a range of other activities as appropriate.*" Following a 2011 business decision by City Council to lease the building to Ports Toronto, the opportunity to explore an arts and heritage destination in the Administration Building was put on hiatus.

With the pending expiration of the building's current lease arrangement, the Ireland Park Foundation has again expressed interest in exploring their long-standing cultural centre proposal. The Foundation proposes that a portion of the building's interior space house an interpretive centre for Ireland Park; while the balance of the building and surrounding open space could be programmed for a range of arts, cultural and community-focused events and uses. This proposal has received favourable community stakeholder feedback, and has my full support.

Ireland Park Foundation has a long-standing partnership with the City of Toronto for the improvement of public open spaces; and a proposed re-use program for the building that is consistent with both the property's "Parks and Open Space" designation in the Official Plan, and the objectives of the Council-adopted Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Plan. I am therefore requesting that:

- 1. Government Management Committee submit this item to City Council without recommendation; and**
- 2. Government Management Committee request the Director of Real Estate Services, in consultation with the Director, Waterfront Secretariat, to negotiate with Ireland Park Foundation terms for a short-term nominal sum lease of a portion of the Administration Building to be used as an arts and heritage destination, and subject to reaching satisfactory terms, report directly to City Council with recommendations on lease terms.**

Sincerely,

Joe Cressy
City Councillor Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina