



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Uses of the Maple Leaf Forever Wood

Date:	August 24, 2015
To:	Economic Development Committee
From:	General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The silver maple tree at 62 Laing Street, believed to be the inspiration for Alexander Muir's Maple Leaf Forever song written in 1867, was felled by a storm on July 19, 2013. The tree's demise generated significant media and public attention across Canada.

Economic Development and Culture (EDC) was the lead City division in the distribution of wood from the Maple Leaf Forever tree and to facilitate various projects across Canada related to this wood.

This report follows up on the direction by City Council at the October 8, 2013 meeting to report back to City Council on the final allocation and uses of the salvaged wood from this tree.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to submit to the Toronto Archives complete documentation, including digital photographs, of all the Maple Leaf Forever Tree projects.
2. City Council publicly expresses its appreciation for the effort made by the project developers and the artisans, wood-workers and other makers across Canada who contributed to the preservation of this important part of Canadian history and culture.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts of this report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

City Council adopted the staff report, Utilization Plans for the Maple Leaf Forever Tree, on October 8, 2013. This report provides the final outcome on item 1 of that report:

- 1. City Council authorize the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture to work with Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Heritage Preservation Services and the City Manager to proceed with the utilization plan for the salvaged wood using the criteria outlined in 3a of the Comments section of the report (September 9, 2013) from the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and to report back on the allocation and use of the salvaged wood.*

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX34.12>

City Council adopted the motion to utilize some of the wood from the Maple Leaf Forever Tree to build a new podium in City Council Chambers on May 6, 2014.

- 2. City Council direct the City Clerk, in consultation with the Chief Corporate Officer, to utilize the wood from the Maple Leaf Forever tree to build a new podium for the City Council Chamber, to be ready for the Inaugural Meeting of the new City Council in December 2014 and that the City Clerk's Office and Facilities Management cooperate to ensure this is accomplished.*

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.MM51.21>

On July 8, 2014 City Council passed the report, Utilization Plans – Wood from the Maple Leaf Forever Tree, which provided a detailed outline of the utilization plans and a preliminary listing of approved projects. This report provides the final action from item 2 of that report:

- 2. City Council direct the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture to report back with a final list of all projects which utilized the wood from the Maple Leaf Forever Tree and to provide the amount of funds raised to support urban forestry initiatives in Toronto*

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.ED32.10>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

On July 19, 2013 a storm brought down an aged silver maple tree on Laing Street in Toronto's Leslieville neighbourhood (Ward 32). This famed maple tree was believed to be the inspiration for the song "Maple Leaf Forever" by Alexander Muir, which he wrote in 1867. This song, like the image of the maple leaf it evokes, has become a powerful symbol for Canadians and Torontonians.

Since the tree fell City staff have engaged in a number of activities to preserve its wood and to extend its legacy locally and nationally. Activities reported on previously:

- EDC coordinated a public milling event at Evergreen Brickworks in March 2014 where the logs from the tree were turned into lumber and other "unique pieces." Approximately 650 board feet of lumber (enough to make 32 dining room tables) was produced. The event was covered by national media.
- The wood was then kiln dried for 3 months by a local urban wood company.
- In June 2014 EDC held a ceremony at Todmorden Mills where the wood was distributed to individuals and/or organizations that had projects that were ready to begin working with the wood to produce the planned items. The event was covered by national media.

Since the staff report of July 8, 2014 City staff activities included:

- Organization of a public display of some of the items made from the Maple Leaf Forever Tree at City Hall on February 15 – 18, 2015, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the Maple Leaf Flag,
- Organization of a public display at the Green Living Show on March 27 – 29, 2015. This display was the featured exposition at the show and was supported by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

COMMENTS

Media Coverage

The fallen tree attracted national attention and continued to hold the interest of the media, the public and other stakeholders throughout the timelines of this project.

There have been 48 unique national media stories in print, radio and TV about the wood utilization efforts, and numerous stories done by local community papers and special interest journals. This included lead or front page stories in the CBC National News and the Toronto Star. EDC staff estimates that there were 15,000,000 media impressions on

the Maple Leaf Forever Tree utilization. A Google search of "maple leaf forever tree utilization plans" yielded 1,040,000 results on May 26, 2014.

Funds Raised to Support Urban Forestry Initiatives

Council direction allowed for up to 5% of the wood to be used for fundraising purposes. EDC estimates that approximately 3% of the wood (by volume) was used to generate funds for urban forestry initiatives.

EDC staff worked closely with the Toronto Parks and Tree Foundation (TPTF) and LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests) to use wood from the tree for fundraising activities to support urban forestry initiatives in Toronto. These initiatives can be broken into three categories.

1. Donations for Raw Wood

Individuals or corporations can make a donation to TPTF or LEAF for a specific "unique" piece of wood. There have been 15 donations and \$1,275 has been raised. The projects are listed in the project overview.

2. LEAF – The Maple Leaf Forever Auction

Four pieces were created from the smaller branches and leaves of the tree. An additional 12 pieces were produced by local wood workers selected through a design competition. These pieces were exhibited at the Green Living Show on March 27-29, 2015 and an online auction was held. The total sales value of the items auctioned was \$15,000. An example of a project created through this effort is the Maple Leaf Headphones which were auctioned for \$375.00.

3. EDC - Gifts From the Tree

From the inception of this project EDC received many inquiries from individuals who were interested in obtaining a small piece of the tree. At the first public event held in March 2014, many individuals made voluntary donations after they collected some sawdust in a baggie or took a small, knuckle sized "offcut" from the sawmilling.

EDC used small wood pieces that had no value for various projects to produce pens, small maple leaf carvings and stamped offcuts that were then sold, along with bottles of sawdust from the tree. Sales of these items generated \$5,317.

These "gifts from the tree" were also sold to various City ABCDs which used them for gifts which raised an additional \$2,200.

The funds raised were used to support EDC's Urban Wood Industry Development Initiative. This included the production of a directory of the Toronto urban wood industry and a pamphlet which provides information on how to produce useful products from removed trees using Toronto's urban wood industry and is handed out when a tree removal permit is applied for.

The Maple Leaf Forever Tree Projects

A total of 65 individual projects, 153 unique designs (a number of the projects made more than one design) and 4,025 individual items (duplicates of designs) produced from the wood of the Maple Leaf Forever Tree.

All of the wood has been distributed except for 3 small, low quality pieces, that have a maximum size is 8"x4"x40". These pieces will be integrated into existing projects.

A report cataloguing all of the Maple Leaf Forever Tree projects can be found in the attachment to this report. Every project that met the criteria established by Council was approved. Some of the high profile projects include the following:

- The Toronto Council Speaker's Podium
- A Maple Leaf Forever nested bowl set, which is on display at the Royal Ontario Museum
- The Maple Leaf Forever Heritage Tree Carving, which is now housed at the Ontario Science Centre
- The flag pole and pole holder which now sits beside the Speaker of the House in the House of Parliament, Ottawa
- The "Keela" side table now on display at Canada House, London, UK
- The Maple Leaf Forever Guitars Trust which has been sponsored by Colin Cripps (Blue Rodeo) and is planned to be lent out to aspiring Canadian musicians
- Maple Leaf Forever Bracelets that were given to each of the Canadian Pan Am / Parapan Am Games athletes

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SIGNATURE

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Attachment:
Appendix A – Catalogue of Projects from the Maple Leaf Forever Tree