

Good Morning Committee Members ...

My name is John Mason. I'm president of the volunteer organization, Friends of Guild Park & Gardens.

I'm here with my colleague, Kate Kennedy, who is vice-president of Friends of Guild Park. We represent the Friends group and three other organizations all active at Guild Park.

We are all pleased to unanimously support Councillor Paul Ainslie's motion. Here are the groups involved:

- **Friends of Guild Park & Gardens** which began in 2013 to bring a “whole-park” focus to the site's programs and facilities.
- **The Guild Festival Theatre.** A team of professionals who have staged live performances at Guild Park's spectacular outdoor Greek Theatre for the past five years.
- **The Guild Renaissance Group** which was founded in 1997 to keep alive the legacy of the Guild of All Arts. Its focus is the return of arts programs and facilities to the park.
- **The Guildwood Village Community Association** began in 1958. It represents the voice of more than 3,000 local households on community issues.

These four groups collaborate closely together. Over the past three years, our volunteer-driven activities have attracted **more than 30,000 visitors to Guild Park.**

These visitors come to see Guild Park's unique natural and heritage features, plus to enjoy a wide range of events that we run, including:

- The arts festival, Guild Alive With Culture, organized by Councillor Ainslie's office and the Guild Renaissance Group;
- Live, professional theatre each summer – from Shakespeare to Oscar Wilde!
- Walking tours for Doors Open, Heritage Toronto and Jane's Walk; plus
- Lots of community events – neighbourhood barbeques, movie nights and other celebrations

That's overview of the volunteer groups and our park activities. Now, I'd like to share three reasons why Guild Park is an ideal place for Nuit Blanche in 2017

- **First, the idea supports Toronto's vision for the arts**

Guild Park and Nuit Blanche align with the City of Toronto's strategic vision for arts and culture:

- To use cultural events as economic drivers across the city; and

- To increase the public’s access to these events to communities outside the downtown core.

Guild Park has huge potential to be a city-wide destination for arts and culture – in a green setting.

Recognizing this potential are three recent City reports:

- The 2015 Annual Report of the Economic Development & Culture Division, which was released today. Guild Park is referred to on pages 2 and 27 of the report.
 - the *Management Plan For Guild Park & Gardens*; and
 - *Making Space for Culture*, which recommended “the adaptive re-use and restoration of the Guild [Park & Gardens] property ... for cultural activity.”
- **Second reason: Guild Park is where art meets nature.**

Guild Park’s 88 acres of gardens, forest, waterfront and heritage have inspired artists’ imaginations for almost 85 years. It’s a place of creativity, natural attractions and historical artifacts.

These are ideal ingredients for Nuit Blanche creators and curators. They provide a unique “green” and historic canvas for art installations. This makes Guild Park **literally** a “natural’ choice for Nuit Blanche.

- **Final Reason: Guild Park is supported by active groups of committed volunteers who are passionate about hosting arts and cultural events at the park**

The results that our groups have achieved show the ongoing interest in events at Guild Park by visitors from across Toronto, across Ontario and Canada ... and around the world.

These results also demonstrate:

- the close and effective collaboration among Guild Park's volunteers;
- our ability to partner with the many City departments responsible for running Guild Park; and
- the local councillor's support of Guild Park's revitalization and his support of the volunteer activities at Guild Park

Our volunteer organizations are excited about adding Nuit Blanche to the growing number of successful arts and cultural events hosted at Guild Park.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support this motion.

Extra info conveyed during councillors' questions

- **2017 marks a milestone year for Guild Park**

Guild Park will be celebrating a series special events next year. 2017 is:

- 10th Anniversary of the Guild Alive with Culture arts festival
- 35th Anniversary of the opening of the Greek Theatre
- 50th anniversary of Netherlands Queen Juliana's stay at the original Guild Inn – part of her state visit to Canada
- The 85th anniversary of the founding of the Guild of All Arts and, of course,
- The 150th birthday of Canada

Past events

- Hosting Nuit Blanche marks the return of significant outdoor cultural events to Guild Park. A similar large-scale event took place when the site hosted the international Contemporary Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition in 1982.
- This marked the 50th anniversary of the Guild of All Arts. Canadian sculptor, Sorel Etrog, arranged for 35 works to be display on the grounds. The event was supported by notable movers and shakers – Ontario Premier Bill Davis, Metropolitan Toronto Chair Paul Godfrey, Jean Sutherland Boggs, Chair of Canada Museums, and philanthropist Spencer Clark, who founded the Guild of All Arts with his wife, Rosa.

Additional info

Kudos for the ongoing work at Guild Park by City Staff, specifically:

- the horticultural team led by Park Supervisor Chris Martin; and
- The Urban Forestry Division led by Beth McEwen for replanting more than 4,200 native trees and shrubs in the park after the devastation of the Emerald Ash Borer and the ice storm in 2013.

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