

Donation of International Mother Language Day Monument in Taylor Creek Park

Date: August 23, 2017

To: Parks and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards: Ward 31 - Beaches-East York

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from City Council to accept a donation and enter into donor and construction agreements with International Mother Language Day Monument Implementation Committee, Inc. to establish an International Mother Language Day monument in Taylor Creek Park.

International Mother Language Day (IMLD) is an important annual event for the Bangladeshi diaspora. It commemorates an event on February 21, 1952 when four students died in a fight to have Bengali recognized as an official language in what was then East Pakistan and later became Bangladesh. The 30th General Conference of UNESCO held on November 17, 1999, unanimously proclaimed February 21st as International Mother Language Day to protect and promote linguistic diversity and multilingual education in the 6,700 languages of the world. This has become an important celebration in Bengali communities in Toronto, and around the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to accept an in-kind donation of a monument valued up to \$0.25 million from International Mother Language Day Monument Implementation Committee, Inc., in compliance with the City's Policy on Donations for Community Benefits.
2. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to negotiate and sign donation and construction agreements with International Mother Language Day Monument Implementation Committee, Inc., subject to the City receiving satisfactory evidence that International Mother Language Day Monument Implementation Committee, Inc. has sufficient funds to complete the upgrades, and subject to the work physically commencing within two years, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

The value of the donation is estimated at \$0.25 million and all costs associated with the project, including ongoing maintenance of the monument beyond current park maintenance, will be undertaken by International Mother Language Day Monument Implementation Committee, Inc.

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

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting of January 31, 2017, adopted the Public Art and Monuments Donation Policy:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX21.5>

Toronto and East York Community Council, at its meeting of April 8, 2014, through item TE31.93, "Placing an International Mother Language Day Monument at 260 Dawes Road", requested that the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation review the suitability of the proposed location in the 260 Dawes Road entrance to Taylor Creek Park for the installation of an IMLD Monument:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.TE31.93>

City Council, at its meeting of October 30, 31 and November 1, 2012, amended its Donations to the City for Community Benefits policy:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.EX23.17>

Scarborough Community Council, at its meeting of February 14, 2012, through item SC13.30, "International Mother Language Day (IMLD) Monument in Confederation Park", approved the designation of the north-west corner of Confederation Park as the prospective location for an IMLD monument:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.SC13.30>

City Council, at its meeting of September 25, 26, 27 and 28, 2006, adopted its Donations to the City for Community Benefits policy.

http://www1.toronto.ca/city_of_toronto/toronto_office_of_partnerships/files/pdf/donation_policy.pdf

COMMENTS

International Mother Language Day is an important annual event for the Bangladeshi diaspora. It commemorates an event on February 21, 1952 when four students died in a fight to have Bengali recognized as an official language in what was then East Pakistan and later became Bangladesh. International Mother Language Day remembers this

incident and celebrates all mother languages. The 30th General Conference of UNESCO held on November 17, 1999, unanimously proclaimed February 21st as International Mother Language Day to protect and promote linguistic diversity and multilingual education in the 6,700 languages of the world. This has become an important celebration in Bengali communities around the world.

Towards an IMLD monument in Toronto

The Bengali community in Crescent Town has spent years looking for a suitable location to erect an International Mother Language Day monument in Toronto.

As part of this effort, and while not officially Public Art, the community proponents undertook a public consultation and artwork proposal similar to the process outlined in the City's guidelines for public art donations. Following a public call for proposals in late 2014, three options were circulated for public review and comment through the winter of 2015, with a final design unveiled in March 2015.

Since that time, the proponents and the City have been working closely to refine the design, investigate the feasibility of the site and to ensure appropriate approvals and feedback are received.

This proposal, having been in front of Council or its committees since 2012, does not comply precisely with the process laid out in the Public Art and Monuments Donation Policy, which was approved in January 2017. The proposal does, however, meet the principles of the policy and has undergone thematic, technical, aesthetic, and public review as outlined in the policy.

Site selection and suitability

Members of the local Bangladeshi community proposed the centre of the driveway loop that forms an entrance to Taylor Creek Park at 260 Dawes Road as the location for the monument, after determining that previous proposed locations were not suitable. Toronto East York Community Council subsequently requested that staff investigate the feasibility of the Taylor Creek Park location.

The design of the monument and its proposed location have undergone a review by City staff as well as the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and there is general agreement on this location. Final approvals will be provided through the standard permit process, which is not completed until construction is ready to commence.

Next steps

International Mother Language Day Monument Implementation Committee, Inc. will be required to raise the necessary funds to complete the monument, and donor and construction agreements would not be signed until they provide the City with satisfactory evidence that they have raised the required amount.

International Mother Language Day Monument Implementation Committee, Inc. will undertake construction and will lead procurement, permit application and other

necessary approvals for the project, and will procure all materials and supplies and carry out the construction in accordance with all City by-laws, policies and contractual requirements, including compliance with the City's Fair Wage and Contractual Obligations in the Construction Industry Policies. Terms requiring adherence to these policies will be included in the construction agreement.

Once built, the City will become the owner of the monument, and will continue to undertake regular maintenance of the site such as gardening and lawn mowing, however maintenance of the monument itself will remain the responsibility of International Mother Language Day Monument Implementation Committee, Inc.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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