

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee

Report From: Adam Parsons, Manager of Parks and Open Space

Meeting Date: October 16, 2019

Report Code: CS-19-134

Subject: Gitche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Plaque

Recommendations:

That in consideration of Staff Report CS-19-134 respecting the Gitche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Plaque, Community Services Committee recommends Council approve the content for the plaque detailed in this report.

Strategic Initiative:

Enhance tourism opportunities for active and passive year round enjoyment

Encourage and promote participation in cultural activities and active lifestyles

Support community safety and social inclusion

Maintain, improve and promote the use of our local parks and trails

Background:

In 2010, Council approved a Master Plan for Kelso Beach Park. The plan is a long term improvement strategy aimed to maximize the potential of this public open space. To date, high priority projects including Phragmites control, the splash pad and accessible washroom and changerooms have been completed.

The Master Plan recognized the history of the Park as the site of the First Nations of Nawash settlement. The Anishinaabe territory extended from Collingwood to Goderich. In winter people moved in small groups to hunting

areas but in the spring they returned to Nawash. Kelso Beach Park is located at the Nawash settlement area.

In the preparation of the Master Plan there were several opportunities for public input. An initial visioning session, an open house and 2 formal public meetings took place.

Community input highlighted opportunities to celebrate the early history of the park. This idea was reflected in the final conceptual park design in the "Pottawatomi Healing Trail" which includes the Piyak Ootih or One Heart Memorial Garden centred on alignment of the existing pedestrian bridge. The One Heart Garden is reflected as a priority in the park following Phragmites control, site servicing improvements and the splash pad.

The Reconciliation Garden project was initiated by Susan Shank as the "Circle of One Heart Garden". The Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee, at their meeting on [May 9, 2013](#), Committee made the following recommendation regarding the project:

Moved by Paul Foster

That in consideration of a report from the Director of Community Services dated May 3, 2013, that the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee support in principle the concept of the Circle of One Heart Garden for Kelso Beach Park (conditional on achieving the partnership(s) and identifying adequate and appropriate funding sources) and recommend the following steps with respect to the proposal:

- **Request that the Circle of One Heart Group refine their design including elevations with more details on construction;**
- **Based on the more detailed proposal, the project would be circulated by City for comment and input from Grey Sauble Conservation Authority and City Departments;**
- **Consultation with First Nations, SON and Métis regarding the project including resolution from Chippewas of Nawash and Saugeen First Nation;**

- Letters and emails of support from these communities have been provided.

- **Finalize approval of the City based on results of consultation and input received from the City’s commenting partners and City departments;**
- **Put forward capital budget in 2014 for consideration by Council”**

Carried unanimously

The Circle of One Heart Garden group prepared their proposal over the next 2 years and returned to Community Services Committee on May 18, 2016 with a revised project scope and a new project name: 'Reconciliation Garden'.

The Gitche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Committee presented a deputation to Community Services Committee on April 26, 2017 outlining the goals of the project. Staff accompanied the deputation with report CS-17-087 Reconciliation Garden, Detailed Landscape Design proposal and Next Steps.

Moved by Councillor Greig

CS-170426-002

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-17-087 respecting the design proposal for the Reconciliation Garden project at Kelso Beach Park, based on a plan by Thomas Dean, Landscape Architect, the Community Services Committee recommends Council approve the plan subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The removal of the two English Oak trees be permitted so long as four new trees are planted as per the site plan and in accordance with the City’s Tree Preservation Policy;**
- 2. Drainage and grading profiles must be submitted and approved by City Planning and Engineering staff prior to construction;**
- 3. Obtain a permit from the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority prior to construction;**
- 4. Benches must be the City standard park bench;**
- 5. Ensure rest stops are provided every 30m on pathways to meet AODA requirements where topographical limitations permit;**
- 6. The Sturgeon sculpture design detail is to be submitted for consideration in a future report as per policy AG10 (Public Art Policy); and**
- 7. Dry stream bed material is to be secured or another material is to be selected to the satisfaction of the Manager of Parks and Open Space."**

Carried.

Analysis

A combination of fundraising and council approved funds permitted the construction of phase 1 in 2019. City Staff and the Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Committee believe that the procurement and installation of the interpretive plaque is a suitable next step.

Attached to this report is the draft content and background design of the plaque.

The Gitche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden is a collaboration for reconciliation at Kelso Beach Park, the site of the ancestral village of Nawash. Identified in the Kelso Beach Master Plan, the feature is currently under construction.

The Interpretive Plaque fulfills a commitment made by the City to the project in 2017.

Fundraising for the project by the Gitche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Committee is ongoing. They anticipate the completion of phase 1 and the implementation of additional phases in 2020.

Financial/Budget Implications:

\$2,000 for the production of the plaque, included in the 2019 Capital Budget Program.

Communication Strategy:

This report to Committee and Council.

Consultation:

Nahneebahweequay known as Susan Staves Schank member of Chippewas of Nawash at Neyaashiinigmiing in 2019

Attachments:

1. Gitche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Interpretive Plaque Content and Background Image

Prepared by:	Adam Parsons	Signature on File
Reviewed by:	Kristan Shrider	Signature on File
Supported by:	Pam Coulter	Signature on File
Submitted by:	Wayne Ritchie	Signature on File

Gitche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Interpretive Plaque Content

“Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal people’s education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.” – Credit quote

Essential to Indigenous way of life, is the connection with the land (Aki), known as Turtle Island. The land is where the Ancestors are buried; their spirits protect and care for Aki. An Indigenous way of life is based in spirituality, plant-based medicine, dance, music and art, and a belief that we are all a part of creation, nurtured by the gifts of Mother Earth who is a powerful healer and Mother to all our Relations.

Giche Namewikwedong means: Great Sturgeon Bay, which was the original place name of Georgian Bay before contact.

The Giche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Committee was established in 2010, with a goal of building a permanent healing and reconciliation garden that recognizes and celebrates the Indigenous history that exists at the City of Owen Sound's Kelso Beach Park.

Since 2010, the Giche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Committee has worked with the City of Owen Sound and Indigenous Elders who are knowledge holders in our region, using their input and cultural knowledge, to develop a detailed plan for an art and historical installation and garden at Kelso Beach Park, formerly and historically the site of the original Newash Village once home to the Saugeen Ojibwa Nation.

The Saugeen Ojibwa Nation (SON) territory is the home of the Anishinabek, understood as “the original people” whose language is Anishinaabemowin. The Anishinabek are part of the three fires confederacy located in the Great Lakes area, which consisted of the Ojibway or Chippewa, “Keepers of the Faith”, the Odawa or Ottawa, “Keepers of Trade”, the Bodewadmi or Potawatomi “Keepers of the Fire”.

SON territory extends from the Nottawasaga River across to Goderich, including the Maitland valley river system, and north to Tobermory. Our territory also includes all of the fishing islands and the waters surrounding our territory.

The Garden is intended to help all cultures within our community move forward with shared understanding and respect, humility and love in our hearts; it helps all to walk softly and be ever mindful. The art pieces share Indigenous culture and healing practices.

The Sturgeon Installation brings with it the 7 dodem teachings and family names. The indigenous plants in the gardens tell stories and legends of the history of the location. The project reclaims place, culture, ecology and wellness. We are proud to acknowledge and celebrate the history and culture of the First Nations and Métis peoples of the Grey Bruce area.

In the Spirit of reconciliation the garden is a contemplative place where our community can pause, reflect and remember, learn about the past legacy of residential schools and the intergenerational trauma that still exist today.

The project helps our community move forward with shared understanding and respect, humility and love in our hearts, walk softly and be ever mindful.

Goals of the Project are:

- a) To acknowledge our first peoples' presence, on this traditional territory, in the past, present and future.
- b) To reclaim place, culture, ecology, and wellness.
- c) To educate all nations about the legacy of residential schools, and help build better relationships through reconciliation.

Together we walk the sacred path of truth and honor and build a better future, walking in a sacred way. What we do today, is for future generations.

Through traditional stories, and Indigenous plantings we honour and remember our First Nations and Métis Ancestors.

With open and friendly dialogue, we strive for mutual understanding, balance, and unity for the people of our community so that we may move forward together, in a good way, and with one heart.

Having the history of local Indigenous Peoples made public and accessible in the garden, establishes common ground and starts conversations: a place for people of all nations to gather. We make the current "invisible" presence and History of Indigenous people "visible" to people walking through the Garden. Increasing the awareness and respect for long ignored history, culture and traditions of our local Indigenous peoples will help our community address ongoing racism and colonialism.

In addition to being a place of contemplation, the garden serves as a gathering place for culturally significant events. Weddings, baptisms, Aboriginal Day, the solstice and equinox. The space is meant to be inclusive, and is intended to be used for reflection, celebration and education.

The Garden is a place to sit with Grandfather and Grandmother Stones, to enjoy Indigenous sacred plants and trees, and to inspire a deeper understanding of our community. The Garden encourages conversations about the residential school legacy, the intergenerational impacts that are felt today, the impacts of racism and discrimination. The Garden was dedicated July 1st 2017, as part of Owen Sound's Festival Canadian "Maawanji'iding" (The Gathering).

Submitted by Nahneebahweequay known as Susan Staves Schank member of Chippewas of Nawash at Neyaashiinigmiing in 2019

With files from:

Elder Paul Nadjiwah member of Chippewas of Nawash at Neyaashiinigmiing

Elder Shirley John member of Saugeen Nation at Saugeen

Chief Greg Nadjiwon of Chippewas of Nawash at Neyaashiinigmiing

Chief Lester Anquot of Saugeen Nation at Saugeen

Grey Roots Museum and Archives

Library and Archives Canada

The Archives of Ontario

Saugeen Ojibway Nation History Group

Gitche Namewikwedong Reconciliation Garden Plaque Background Image

