

CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

December 18, 2002

TO: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
FROM: Britannia Heritage Shipyard Advisory Board
RE: **Annual Report**

ORIGIN

The Britannia Heritage Shipyard Advisory Board was first established in mid-2001 as part of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Britannia Heritage Shipyard Business Plan (September 2000). The Advisory Board represents the City's interest in the development of the Britannia site in a manner consistent with the adopted business plan.

ANALYSIS

Since its establishment, the Board has focused on setting the policies and developing plans to facilitate the orderly implementation of the Business Plan recommendations. Many of the recommendations are aimed at completing capital improvements at the site to enhance the value of Britannia as a working heritage shipyard and destination for both residents and visitors.

Over the past year, the Board has prioritized and scheduled through 2008 the capital projects outlined in the Business Plan and identified the various management, programming and organizational impacts associated with the completion of the planned projects. Site management is now guided by these long-term plans.

Capital Projects Completed

A number of capital improvements have also been completed since the Board's appointment, not the least of which was the upgrading of the main shipyard building to allow for public access to this most important building. Re-building of the wharf in front of the shipyard building was also completed this summer. This facilitates public access to this waterfront area and to the floats attached to it for

vessel viewing. Dredging adjacent to the dock and floats was also completed this summer to a minimum 3.5 metres depth.

Subsequent to the Tall Ships Festival, the float and ramp from No. 3 Road and two new ramps from 6th Ave and 7th Ave were all installed at Britannia, replacing existing wood ramps, completing a safe public circulation route through the shipyard building, out onto the floats on the River and back up to shore adjacent to the Seine Loft building.

Tall Ships Involvement

Britannia's involvement in the Tall Ships Festival was a great success, thanks in large part to the active involvement of the volunteers of the Britannia Heritage Shipyard Society, with whom the Board has a productive working relationship.

Highlights of the Society's efforts included launching of the MV Fleetwood, which was restored by Society volunteers. Britannia also hosted the early arrivals and was the site of well-organized exhibits, entertainment and a concessions area. With the help of a number of volunteers, Britannia managed to put approximately 2500 people a day onto the boats tied up at the floats.

Future Capital Projects

The stabilization of the Japanese Duplex building is the next priority on the list of capital improvements. The City's Facilities Management Department has completed the engineering studies and drawing for the foundations. Stabilization work has not yet started, but tenders are expected to be issued soon.

Stabilization of the Cannery Office building is also a priority but Facilities Management has made no progress on this building to date.

We understand a detailed Inspection Report for the superstructure of the Seine Net Loft building has been commissioned by Civic Buildings' staff and completed, but a copy has not yet been forwarded to the Advisory Board. Work should be undertaken early in 2003 and will include the initial stages of stabilization so the Seine Loft can be used and accessible to the public.

The Board has been made aware of pending developments with the two stilt pile houses currently planned for demolition at the foot of 7th Avenue. The relocation and restoration of these particular buildings were not part of the original plan for the Historic Precinct area at the east side of the site, therefore this project is not part of our priority plans, which focused on existing buildings on the site.

Planned capital projects in the Historic Precinct scheduled for late 2003 and into 2004 include restoration and integration of the Chinese Bunkhouse and Murchison House. Moving the two stilt pile houses to Britannia should trigger an

updated development plan for the Historic Precinct, together with a capital financing plan.

There has also been some discussion about including within Britannia's mandate the management and restoration of the Gillnet Loft recently acquired by the City. Staff, at a recent meeting, indicated that they had assumed this project would become part of Britannia's operations. Again, since this structure has not been a part of planning for Britannia, without the allocation of resources above and beyond those already required for the existing Britannia priority projects, the Board is at a loss as to how to integrate this project into the plans set in the original Business Plan.

Other Projects

A comprehensive interpretive signage program has almost entirely been completed on the site, affording the public an opportunity to learn about the various buildings at Britannia simply by walking through the site. With the completion of the waterfront trail through the BC Packers' site, welcome and orientation signage is also being enhanced.

From time to time, unforeseen repair and maintenance issues arise, outside the scope of operational and capital planning and the Board is forced to consider these. One such issue is the recent discovery of the deteriorated condition of the sub-surface structure of the main boat ways in the Shipyard Building. While the restoration of the Shipyard Building has included upgrading of the sub-structure and the super-structure, no work was done on the ways. This is the main mechanism used to convey vessels in and out of the water in the Shipyard Building.

Ignoring the current deteriorated condition of this structure would result in jeopardizing the valuable historic vessels that are transported in and out of the Shipyard Building. A request has been submitted for approximately \$55,000 to complete these repairs as part of the 2003 minor capital projects budget and we hope this request receives the urgent positive attention it deserves.

With the appointment of the Britannia Site Manager, consistency in on-site programming and the future development of interpretive exhibits is now possible. The Manager is also forging new relationships with other agencies that might be able to assist in adding value to the Britannia experience, including the Vancouver Wooden Boat Show, the Victoria Classic Boat Festival, and the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival. An affiliation agreement with the Vancouver Wooden Boat Society has been executed and they are now based out of Britannia.

CONCLUSION

The Board is pleased with the progress it has made in implementing the recommendations of the Business Plan. We believe that, by adhering to the principles and goals in the business plan and prioritizing the capital improvements along with their consequent management, programming and organizational impacts, we can realize the vision for Britannia—to make it a publicly accessible waterfront heritage park and working museum with passive, active and interactive activities, focusing on the local marine heritage.