



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Community Services Committee

To Community Services - August 29, 2000
DATE: August 10, 2000

FROM: Dave Semple
Director, Parks

FILE: ~~7025-05-~~
6550 - 01

RE: Wakayama Kenjin Kai Proposal for Planting Cherry Trees in Steveston

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council approve the proposal by the BC Wakayama Kenjin Kai to plant Japanese cherry trees in appropriate and approved areas within Steveston; and,
2. That Council direct staff to work with the representatives of the BC Wakayama Kenjin Kai to determine these locations for tree planting.

Dave Semple
Director, Parks

Att. 2

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STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

In the Spring of 2000, City staff were approached by Dr. Jim Tanaka, President of the BC Wakayama Kenjin Kai (the Wakayama Prefecture Association founded in 1965) with a proposal to plant Japanese cherry trees along the Steveston waterfront to recognize and honor the Japanese pioneers who immigrated to British Columbia and lived and worked within the Steveston area. Parks Services staff have met with Dr. Tanaka twice to discuss the feasibility of the project. This report outlines the proposal and potential areas for implementation.

ANALYSIS

The BC Wakayama Kenjin Kai are an active association that promotes among many things the legacy and heritage of the Wakayama Prefecture in Japan from where many of the Japanese families in Steveston originated. In order to recognize the role of these families and to continue the legacy for present and future members of the BC Wakayama Kenjin Kai, the Association has put forward a proposal to plant Japanese cherry blossom trees in the Steveston Area starting at Garry Point Park.

The original concept presented to staff was for a continuous waterfront trail, from Garry Point Park to the Murakami gardens at Britannia Heritage Shipyard, that would be lined with the cherry trees. There were a number of concerns with the implementation of this concept, the main issue being that the trail is predominantly on the dyke and there are strict regulations that prohibit planting of trees on the dykes. Consideration should also be given to the appropriateness of planting ornamental trees in areas that are predominantly native or natural areas. This was discussed with Dr. Tanaka who understood that a continuous line of trees may not be possible. Instead, we discussed the possibility of still maintaining the sense of a legacy trail by using a combination of street trees and clusters or groves of trees in small pocket parks or staging areas along the waterfront. There may be opportunities for this in the proposed redevelopment of BC Packers lands, in Garry Point Park, along Moncton Street between Garry Point Park and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, in the Southcove Great Pacific Cannery trail/ park, the Britannia Panhandle, and the foot of No. 2 Road by London's Landing.

Another opportunity is to integrate with the public art project in Steveston being managed by Robert Bradbury. This will also eventually be a historic trail celebrating Japanese heritage, however, the focus is on more specific sites throughout Steveston such as Lord Byng School and Britannia Heritage Shipyard. A meeting between Robert Bradbury, City staff, and Dr. Tanaka was held to ensure that both parties were aware of each other's proposals and to discuss the possibility of integrating work.

The year 2000 has special meaning to the members of the BC Wakayama Kenjin Kai as it is both the millennium year and their 35th anniversary as an Association. They will celebrate this by planting a small grove of cherry trees in Garry Point Park close to the existing Kuno Gardens in September, 2000. The exact location of the other plantings would still need to be determined. This is expected to be a long-term project that would take advantage of opportunities that may arise through redevelopment or that the tree planting may be used as a program to mark and celebrate special events in the future. Discussions also ensued about a potential partnership program whereby the City could maintain and nurture cherry trees purchased by the Association for use in future plantings.

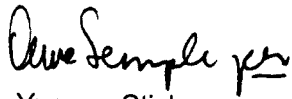
The BC Wakayama Kenjin Kai is requesting approval of the concept of a legacy trail marked by blossoming Japanese cherry trees close to the Steveston waterfront (see Attachment 1).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications at this point.

CONCLUSION

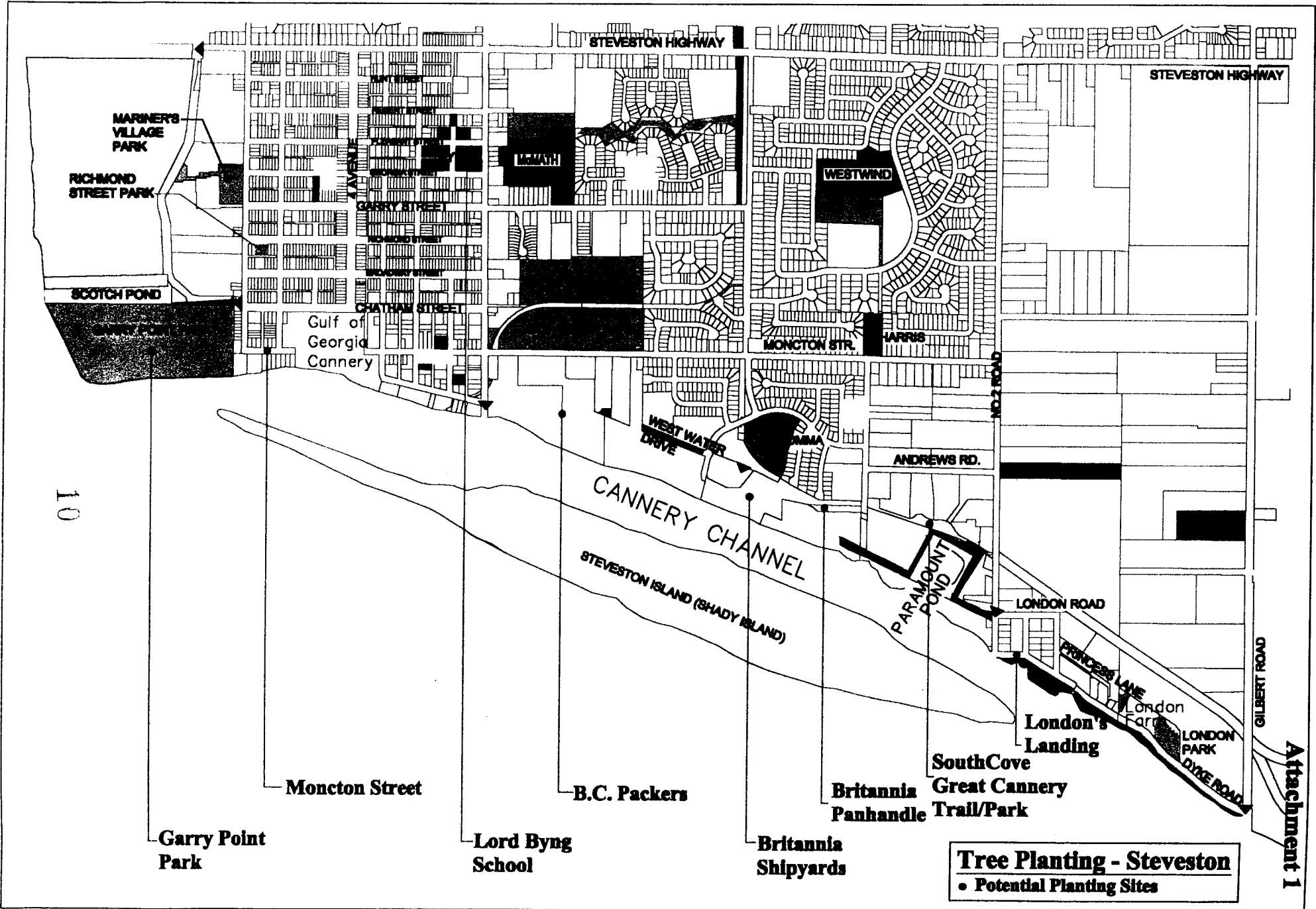
The BC Wakayama Kenjin Kai have approached the City with a proposal to plant Japanese cherry trees close to the Steveston waterfront in order to recognize the contribution of the Japanese pioneers who lived and worked in Steveston. There are a number of existing and future locations that would provide an opportunity to implement this concept. Staff recommends approving the proposal and that staff continue working with the group to find opportunities/locations for future tree planting.



Yvonne Stich
Park Planner

YS:cl

Att. 2



10

Attachment 1

June 2000

***Re: The 35th Anniversary Proposed Project of the B.C. Wakayama Kenjin Kai
Planting of Japanese Cherry Blossom Trees***

To: Mr. Dave Semple,

The purpose of the initial meeting with the staff of the Parks Department (Dave Semple, Yvonne Stich, and Mike Redpath in attendance) on April 28, 2000 was to informally present our proposed project and to inquire as to the feasibility of the project being incorporated into the realm of the Beautification Program or the future development plan of the City of Richmond.

The following is a brief summary of items discussed and addressed at the meeting:

1. Presentation of our proposed project with a brief background information
2. Feasibility of our project being incorporated into the Beautification Program
3. Implementation of the project this fall (Sept. 2000) if approved to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of our association and the new millennium, the 21st century.
4. Consideration of potential/specific areas in Steveston overlooking the Fraser River: dykes, trails, roads (streets) or sites where trees may be planted.
5. Acceptance of our project by unofficial verbal approval and encouraging support from the Parks Department staff in attendance.
6. An emphasis of the importance of our project and its magnitude to reflect on the legacy of the pioneers and ancestors, who emigrated from Wakayama Prefecture, and the past, present and future members of the B.C. Wakayama Kenjin Kai.
7. Unofficial offering of the city nursery as a storage of trees as the need arises: species of Japanese cherry blossom trees to be submitted to the Parks Department.

The B.C. Wakayama Kenjin Kai (Wakayama Prefectural Association founded in 1965) strongly believe that the concept of planting Japanese cherry blossom trees in the specific areas/sites in Steveston is an appropriate and timely project based on the following historical events and criteria:

1. In 1888, Mr. Gihei Kuno immigrated to Steveston from Mio-mura (Mio village) in Wakayama-ken (Wakayama Prefecture) to lead the way for the people of Mio village and subsequently for the Wakayama Prefecture people to establish a better life for themselves and their families.

2. The influx of immigrants from a small fishing village of Mio contributed in part to the thriving fishing industry in Steveston in the late 1800's until 1941.
3. Until the uprooting of the Japanese from the B.C. coast in 1941, the fishing industry in the Steveston community was predominately from Wakayama Prefecture.
4. In honor of Mr. Gihei Kuno, a Japanese garden (Kuno Garden) was built at the Garry Point Park in 1988 to commemorate the centennial year since he immigrated to Steveston in 1888.
5. The late Wakayama Prefectural Governor Shiro Kariya, who visited Richmond in 1990, placed a plaque at the Kuno Garden to honor and pay tribute to Mr. Kuno and the pioneers from Mio village and Wakayama Prefecture in recognition of their courage, determination and leadership.
6. The B.C. Wakayama Kenjin Kai (Wakayama Prefectural Association) was founded by a handful of visionaries in 1965. Since its inception, the association has grown to over 600 in membership today. In fact our association is the largest, most active, progressive and successful Prefectural Association in western Canada. In addition, we are extremely proud of our past accomplishments that we endeavor to leave a legacy and heritage of Wakayama Prefecture for the future generations.
7. Since this is the project of the 35th Anniversary of the B.C. Wakayama Prefecture Association, it is imperative that this project must be started this fall (Sept. 2000) to be significant.
8. This project is not only timely but also appropriate to commemorate the threshold of a new millennium, the 21st century. Also, it is bridging three centuries since Mr. Kuno first set foot in Steveston and saw a school of salmon migrating up the Fraser River in June, 1888.
9. This project is not only to honor and pay tribute to the pioneers but also for recognition and memory of the past, present and perhaps future Wakayama Kenjin Kai members.
10. The twinning of the City of Richmond and Wakayama City of Wakayama Prefecture in 1973, also depicts a significant and close relationship with the grassroots of Wakayama Prefecture.

From the foregoing brief chronicle, it is hoped one can perceive that our association is anxious to have our project officially approved and initiated this fall (Sept. 2000) in cooperation and support of the Parks Department and the City of Richmond. It is indeed fitting at this time for a project of this nature and magnitude to be implemented to preserve a legacy of pioneering spirit of the early pioneers our ancestors, visionary founders of the B.C. Wakayama Kenjin Kai and its past, present and future members. Needless to say, our association is proud of its past accomplishments and endeavors to

preserve the legacy left behind by our predecessors, promote the accomplishments and success of our association, and achieve the missions and goals of the B.C. Wakayama Kenjin Kai in the 21st century.

It is hoped, one can visualize a vivid picture of literally hundreds of Japanese cherry blossom trees in full bloom in Steveston depicting the legacy and heritage of Wakayama Prefecture. Certainly, our association anticipates the impact this project will bring over the course of years and for future generations.

The B.C. Wakayama Kenjin Kai hereby wishes to submit to the Parks Department and the City of Richmond for their consideration and official approval of our project with the following potential and specific sites (areas) in Steveston designated below.

1. Entrance to the existing Kuno Garden or its perimeter as a starting point.
2. Along the trail or dyke overlooking the Fraser River in the Garry Point Park.
3. Area in the existing parking lot in front of the Kuno Garden or area bordering the parking lot.
4. Trail (dyke) leading to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Museum or to the Murakami Heritage House and beyond.
5. Other sites (areas) in close proximity to the Fraser River to depict close relationships between the pioneering ancestors from Wakayama Prefecture and the fishing and related industries in Steveston.

It is hoped our project meets the approval of the Parks Department and the City of Richmond in association with the ongoing Beautification Program. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation and support of our project as submitted.

Sincerely submitted,



JIM H. TANAKA D.D.S.
President, B.C. Wakayama Kenjin Kai

pc: Mayor Greg Halsey Brandt
Mr. Kari Huhtala, Senior Planner
Councilman Kiichi Kumagai
Ms. Yvonne Stich, Park Planner