



To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee

From: Kate Sparrow
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
Jane Fernyhough
Manager, Heritage & Cultural Services

Date: May 3, 2007

File:

Re: Steveston Museum & Post Office

Staff Recommendation

That Council receive this report for information.

Kate Sparrow
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services
(4129)

Jane Fernyhough
Manager, Heritage & Cultural Services
(4288)

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CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>JSW</i>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>AT</i>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

In March, 2007, the Steveston Historical Society learned that Canada Post was planning to open a second outlet in Steveston located in the Super Grocer.

In response to a presentation to the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services meeting March 27, 2007 the following referral was endorsed:

That staff investigate: 1. business possibilities for the Steveston Museum/Post Office building; and 2. the option of operating the Steveston Museum as an addendum of the Richmond Museum, including any financial impact.

Analysis

The Steveston Historical Society has a contract with Canada Post to operate a postal outlet in the Steveston Museum. It is Canada Post's position that with the increased population in the Steveston area the postal service currently being provided by the Steveston Historical Society is inadequate. They have requested changes to the operation, both of hours of operation and service. If the Society is unable or unwilling to make the necessary changes they will negotiate opening a second outlet in Steveston.

Discussions have occurred between the Society, Canada Post and City staff resulting in the identification of the following four options:

Option 1: Status Quo – Maintain the Post Office within the Steveston Museum in its current form (42 hours/week: Monday – Saturday, 9:30 am – 5 pm, closed 30 minutes for lunch). The second outlet will then proceed causing a loss of business for the Steveston Museum location and potentially creating financial hardship for the Steveston Historical Society. In 2006 the Society managed a profit of \$3,555, but in previous years has had to subsidize the Post Office operation through their other activities, such as historical publications and walking tours of Steveston Village.

Should this be the preferred option the Society may ask the City for a grant to subsidize the operation of the post office in order to keep the building open.

Pros:

- no capital costs
- no loss of museum display space

Cons:

- potential financial hardship as a result of a second Steveston postal outlet.
- the Society would likely request financial help from the City to subsidize the post office

Option 2: Maintain the Post Office within the Steveston Museum and make the requested improvements from Canada Post. The second outlet would not proceed at this time.

Required improvements include:

- 90 convenience boxes - \$ 3,000 plus cost of wheels
- 16' of slat-wall for merchandise - \$300 materials plus installation
- 64 hours of operation per week – an additional \$15,000 in salaries
- Illuminated exterior sign - \$ 500 plus installation
- Adequate back room space to support the call for business – could remove some museum display space to accommodate.

The Society would be required to bare the costs of these renovations. They would likely request help from the City.

Pros:

- Improved postal service continues in the Museum
- The Museum space remains open and for longer hours

Cons:

- Cost of alterations must be borne by the Society
- Possible loss of Museum display space
- Canada Post will not guarantee that a second outlet will not open in the future.

Option 3: Close Post Office and enter into an agreement with Tourism Richmond to operate a Visitor Centre (approved by Tourism BC) within the current post office space. This includes removal of post office equipment and installation of signage, a computer system and brochure racks. These costs would be paid by Tourism Richmond. City Heritage staff would train Visitor Centre staff on the heritage of the village and the exhibits within the Museum. The Steveston Historical Society would operate walking tours, sell historical brochures and work with the City on appropriate exhibits.

Pros:

- Prominent location would attract more visitors, increasing opportunity for them to find out more about attractions, dining and accommodation in Steveston and Richmond
- Centre and Museum would be open year round to promote events and activities throughout Richmond
- As part of the Tourism BC network, Steveston and Richmond would be promoted by over 100 visitor centres throughout BC.
- Steveston Historical Society would engage in activities that fit with their mandate of telling the story of the Steveston town site.

Cons:

- Loss of postal service in building

- The City would have agreements with two tenants in the same building (Tourism Richmond & Steveston Historical Society)
- Potential loss of museum display space
- Post office relocated as per Canada Post plan

Option 4: Close Post Office and operate the Steveston Museum as an addendum of the Richmond Museum. This includes:

- removal of current post office space and renovation of walls and floor - \$2000;
- additional exhibits installed in former post office space – 150 sq ft @ \$300-500/sq.ft - \$45,000-75,000; and
- staffing – 2 auxiliary (PG 15 +12%) positions @ May – October, 10 am – 6 pm, Tuesday-Sunday and November- April, 10 am – 4 pm, Friday-Sunday.– \$83,000

Pros:

- Steveston history more accessible
- Additional attraction in Steveston
- Historic building open to the public

Cons:

- Cost

Potential Exhibit Upgrade – The existing exhibits in the Steveston Museum were installed over 20 years ago. The exhibits could be upgraded to better tell the story of Steveston Village using different media including hands-on components to make the museum more interactive. These costs are estimated up to \$300,000 (600 square feet @ \$300 – 500/sq ft) according to industry standards.

Financial Analysis

Option 1 – Unknown

Option 2 - \$3800 capital costs plus installation of post office upgrades and \$15,000 annually for additional salaries - assistance needed by Steveston Historical Society

Option 3 – No City funding required.

Option 4 – \$2000 capital cost for renovations,
\$45,000-75,000 for exhibit development and production,
\$83,000 for staffing annually.

Potential Exhibit Upgrade – up to \$300,000

Financial Impact

No financial impact to the recommendation to receive this report for information.

Conclusion

The Steveston Historical Society holds the contract with Canada Post, not the City. Ultimately it is the Society that must decide if they wish to continue operating the Post Office and in which format. The City could choose to subsidize the post office operation, contribute to the renovations to increase the postal service or enter into a contract with Tourism Richmond. Should the Museum be operated as an adjunct facility to the Richmond Museum the City would be responsible for all the costs. Existing exhibits could be upgraded to improve service for museum visitors in options 2, 3 & 4 with the City responsible for the cost.



Connie Baxter
Supervisor, Richmond Museum and Heritage Services
(8330)

CB:cb