

CITY OF BURNABY

COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: EAGLES ESTATE HERITAGE GARDEN
 5655 SPERLING AVENUE
 2004 ANNUAL LEASE REPORT**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council receive this report for information.
2. THAT Council forward this report to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission for their information.

REPORT

The Community Heritage Commission, at its meeting held on 2004 September 08, received and adopted the attached report providing the 2004 Annual Lease Report of the operation of the Eagles Estate Heritage Garden in Deer Lake Park by the Land Conservancy (TLC) of British Columbia.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Celest Redman
Chair

Councillor Sav Dhaliwal
Vice Chair

<p>COPY: CITY MANAGER DIRECTOR ENGINEERING CITY SOLICITOR CHIEF LICENCE INSPECTOR DIRECTOR PARKS, RECR. & CULT. SERVICES DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING</p>

TO: COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION 2004 August 31
FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING OUR FILE: 77000 20
SUBJECT: EAGLES ESTATE HERITAGE GARDEN, 5655 SPERLING AVENUE
2004 ANNUAL LEASE REPORT

PURPOSE: To provide the 2004 Annual Lease Report of the operation of the Eagles Estate Heritage Garden in Deer Lake Park by the Land Conservancy (TLC) of British Columbia.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be forwarded to Council for their information.
2. **THAT** Council be requested to forward this report to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission for their information.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

Council in 2003 approved a new public use for the Eagles Estate at 5655 Sperling Avenue in Deer Lake Park and instructed staff to lease the property to the Land Conservancy (TLC) of B.C.

The development of Deer Lake Park has been one of the City of Burnaby's long established goals and has included the acquisition and development of lakefront private properties for public use and enjoyment. In recent years substantial civic investments in land and the conservation of significant heritage resources on the south shore of Deer Lake Park have created the opportunity for establishing an enhanced civic presence and wider public uses.

The Eagles Estate is located on the southeast shore of Deer Lake at the corner of Sperling Avenue and Deer Lake Drive, adjacent to the developed park beach and boat rental area. The estate was purchased by the City in 1995 for inclusion into Deer Lake Park. The Park Master Plan has made provision for the Eagles House to be converted from its private residential use to a public use to become a significant historical and horticultural display and feature within the park. The Plan recognized that the Eagles Estate is among Burnaby's "most intact and significant Edwardian styled gardens" and identified its conservation as one of the primary priorities for implementation. The Master Plan identified the goal of preserving the gardens' character defining elements and restoring, to the fullest extent possible, the features of the original landscape. Through accomplishing these objectives the Eagles Estate is to be one of the primary features within Deer Lake Park available for public use and enjoyment.

The opportunity for implementing a public use for the Eagles House has been realized through the interest of TLC of B.C. to relocate their B.C. Mainland head office from Vancouver to Burnaby. Through the direction of Council staff established the terms of a lease arrangement to provide office space in return for managing the conservation and interpretation of this civic heritage site. This agreement also called for an annual report of the operation of the lease to be submitted for the information of the Community Heritage Commission.

2.0 ADAPTIVE REUSE

2.1 *Adaptive Reuse of Eagles House*

The change of use of the Eagles House required some minor upgrade work to ensure the life safety of the occupants and compliance with all the Burnaby's code requirements. The house has now been fully converted to accommodate the TLC office on the main floor and a caretaker's suite on the second floor. Storage space for tools and materials used by garden volunteers has been accommodated in the basement and accessed through the attached garage.

2.2 *Adaptive Reuse of Eagles Garden*

Although the upgrade and maintenance of the heritage garden will be the responsibility of the TLC, there are some substantial capital improvements which require civic investment to ensure the viability of the project. The future restoration of the garden and public access to the site remains limited at this time because of the poor condition of the retaining walls surrounding the north and east facades of the house and staircase which provides the primary connection between the house and garden.

Currently the stairs are fenced off from public access and form an unsightly ruin located prominently on the site. The condition of the walls and staircase have been assessed by a qualified architect/engineer and it was determined that they have failed structurally and will require replacement.

As per the lease agreement, the TLC was obligated to apply for a non-local government application to the Canada/B.C. Infrastructure Program to complete the staircase project. This grant application was completed by the Planning Department in partnership with the TLC and submitted in May 2004. The TLC provided an additional funding commitment, augmented through funds committed by the Burnaby Rhododendron and Gardens Society, to reconstruct all of the estate's former trellis and fencing. This project was added to the Infrastructure Grant Application to take advantage of the potential for increased funding. The Grant Application has been received and reviewed by the BC Ministry of Small Business of Economic Development and the TLC is optimistically awaiting the joint Federal / Provincial announcement that will award the successful grant applicants.

3.0 OPERATIONS

3.1 *Operating Schedule*

The TLC operated the garden program on a seasonal basis in 2003-2004 from Easter (April) through Thanksgiving (October). Since its opening in May 2004, the Interpretive Centre has been available to the public on the formal basis of Wednesday to Sunday from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm. However, due to demand from garden visitors, staff have expanded the hours to include Monday and Tuesday in addition to group tour bookings. The interpretive centre has logged over 300 visitors from May-July 2004.

It is recognized that because the “Eagles Estate Heritage Garden” is located within the boundaries of a public park, the garden will remain open year round. However, access to the interpretation centre and the volunteer program remains limited in the off-season. The actual number of garden visitors has been difficult to determine given the open access that is provided. However, a conservative estimate on the total number of visitors to the property is 4,000 persons annually.

3.2 *Volunteer Program*

The TLC is mandated through the lease to operate a Volunteer Program for the site’s operation for the benefit of the conservation of the Eagles Estate and the citizens of Burnaby. The public’s participation in all areas of the garden’s restoration will be encouraged and range from volunteer opportunities for fund-raising, gardening, interpretation and programming. This provides a unique experience in Burnaby and the region for volunteers to participate in heritage garden conservation.

In the first year of operation from July 2003 - July 2004 the TLC operated 18 public ‘work party’ events that provided the initial clearing of the overgrowth in the garden and has set the stage for the next phase of garden restoration to begin. Over 75 volunteers have participated in the garden volunteer program and logged over 1,000 hours. The commitment from volunteers has been outstanding and has contributed largely to the success of the garden restoration project.

Staff is very pleased with the enthusiasm, dedication and care shown by the garden’s volunteers during the first phase of the garden restoration. The overall improvement to the heritage garden through the removal of invasive species has been remarkable and is a credit to the volunteers of the TLC. Many original plant specimens, long dormant or hidden garden features have been recovered through their efforts. The challenge for the next phase of restoration is for the TLC to sustain and expand the volunteer program to meet their needs.

3.3 *Interpretation & Programming*

The attached garage was opened to the public as an interpretive centre to present the history of the house and garden, and to promote TLC projects work throughout the Province. The centre which opened in May 2004, was renovated and upgraded through by the TLC at no expense to the City. Through the cooperation of the Parks Department, new directional signage will be installed to facilitate awareness of the garden, its' location and the parking facilities at Deer Lake Beach.

The interpretation and conservation of the garden were substantially aided by the continued generosity of Burnaby citizens Phil and Marion Herring, relatives of Drs. Blythe and Violet Eagles. During the restoration project the Herring's donated a collection of over 600 colour slides to the City of Burnaby which document the horticultural history of the Eagles Estate from 1950 to 1980. This historic documentation provides an invaluable visual history of the garden and will form a tremendous resource for future restoration of the heritage garden.

TLC staff and volunteers provide interpretation and guided tours of the estate for both groups and the general public. The garden served as the location for a number of civic events and tours that were hosted by the TLC including: the annual Burnaby Garden Tour, the Rhododendron Festival, the B.C. Heritage Society Conference, and Burnaby's sister-city visit. The garden is featured in the new heritage walking tour guide of Deer Lake Park which has brought substantial new visitors to the site.

As part of the interpretation and programming mandate, the TLC proposes that a number of events and programs will occur as part of the operations in 2005-2006 to bring additional activity to the site and engage park visitors to raise their public profile and needed revenues for conservation work.

3.4 *Fund-raising*

The garden remains open to the public without charge, however the TLC has been active in soliciting public and corporate donations to the project. At this point, with restoration of the garden staircase not yet completed, the use of the garden for public rentals has not been implemented for fund-raising purposes.

3.5 *Caretaker and Garden Security*

The TLC were mandated to hire an on-site caretaker to offer security for the house and garden through their residence in the second floor suite. The caretaker is required during the evening hours when the garden is vulnerable to vandalism.

Some vandalism continues to occur within the park, especially to the garden's interpretive signage. Additionally, there has been evidence of continued vandalism to the garden's trees along Sperling Avenue and in the Park picnic area which have caused significant harm to

City owned trees both within and adjacent to the lease area. Parks Department staff are aware of the situation and are continuing to monitor the health of trees at this location.

4.0 LEASE TERMS

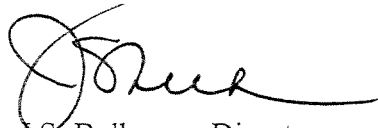
The City's lease with the TLC provides the Eagles residence as the office for their B.C. mainland headquarters in exchange for their undertaking to fund-raise, conserve, interpret and program the "Eagles Estate Heritage Garden" on behalf of the City of Burnaby.

The lease arrangement requires that the TLC contribute an equivalent value of service to the City of Burnaby in exchange for the established lease rate of the house as an office. TLC staff have logged over 900 hours for the garden project. In August, 2004 the TLC hired a part-time gardener to begin the next phase of the site's restoration. From a review of the TLC operation, a substantial "in kind" return of value to the City of Burnaby for this lease was accomplished during the first year of operation.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The City of Burnaby's partnership with the Land Conservancy of British Columbia in the Eagles Estate Heritage Garden has provided a substantial benefit. Conservation of Eagles Estate has long been a goal of the City's heritage program and Deer Lake Park Plan. This new partnership has expanded volunteer opportunities for those interested in both heritage and horticulture and provides another attraction for tourists as well as an amenity for residents.

Staff will continue to work in partnership with the TLC to ensure the continued lease requirements are met and that this landmark heritage property is conserved as part of the Deer Lake Park heritage precinct. Overall the garden project has achieved considerable progress during its first year of operation utilizing limited financial resources. The success of the project is largely due to the considerable management efforts of the TLC Lower Mainland Region staff and the outstanding personal contributions of the TLC volunteers and citizens of Burnaby.



J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JW:\tn

cc: City Manager
Director Engineering
City Solicitor
Chief Licence Inspector
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services