

City of North Vancouver council gives green light to Pipe Shop shipyard site

By Anne Watson, North Shore News July 17, 2013



An artist's rendering of what a kids' gallery inside a new North Vancouver Museum might look like inside the historic Pipe Shop building on the North Vancouver waterfront.

Photograph by: supplied photo , for North Shore News

THE City of North Vancouver has given the green light for a new waterfront location of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives - provided proponents can raise half of the \$10 million needed to build the exhibit and a business plan on operating costs checks out.

If it goes ahead, the museum will be located in the Pipe Shop on Lot 4 of the old shipyards site on the waterfront and will provide almost double the current space.

"We believe we can build a bigger and better museum," said Sanford Osler, vice chair of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives. "This is a great all-weather introduction to North Vancouver."

Nancy Kirkpatrick, director of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, said the museum would include three thematic galleries showcasing human and natural history, a children's gallery and an idea exchange area.

"A suspension bridge will span the lobby and lead to a second floor tree canopy which contains contents specifically about history of the North Shore," said Kirkpatrick.

The museum will cost approximately \$10 million to build. Of that, the city has agreed to shoulder half the cost. The rest of the money will have to come from fundraising. The city has asked the museum commission to complete a fundraising feasibility study to assess where that money might come from.

Council has also asked staff to review the estimates of projected operating costs for the new museum.

Currently, the city and district split the cost of operating the museum, both contributing about \$500,000 annually towards a \$1 million operating budget.

The operating budget for a new museum is projected to be higher - about \$1.7 million a year. Museum officials are projecting the difference in costs can be made up through charging admission, plus rentals and corporate sponsorships.

"The presentation we made to the District was very well received, we will be going back to them probably in September," Kirkpatrick told council Monday night. "What we have heard from them is they're happy with what we've been doing, if there is no net increase in what they are providing, then they are certainly willing to look at this."

Admission rates are being projected at \$7.50.

Most of council was in support of moving forward with plans for the new museum. "This has been a long and winding road," said Coun. Rod Clark. "We have a very dedicated group of people who put in a lot of time and effort so far and in my mind are charged now, and seem to be taking the charge, in going ahead."

Coun. Don Bell was equally as enthusiastic about the project. "What we want people to know is it's a facility that deals not only with the past, but it deals with the present and it deals with the future," said Bell.

But some councillors, although supportive, still had reservations about the commission's business plan.

"Just because I'm enthusiastic to move ahead doesn't mean I'm prepared to buy into it," said Coun. Craig Keating. "I'm concerned about the relationship between the city of North Vancouver and the District of North Vancouver in terms of the operation of the museum."

The business case has left Keating "cold and unconvinced" and council needs better numbers, he said.

"If we don't get it right and we end up with a white elephant on the waterfront that's not going to be able to sustain itself, we'll all feel pretty bad," said Keating.

Coun. Linda Buchanan also had concerns regarding the business case as well as the admission rates, but was supportive of moving the museum to a new location. "I believe we need a community municipal museum," said Buchanan.

The current museum is located at Presentation House on West 4th Street and houses approximately 20,000 historic local and regional artifacts.

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