

Report

City of Merritt
REGULAR Council Meeting
September 15, 2020

File Number: 0550.20

To: Sean Smith, Chief Administrative Officer

From: Will George, Economic Development, Communication, & Tourism Manager

Date: September 10, 2020

Subject: New Murals in the City of Merritt

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council provided the Nicola Valley Arts Council with \$5,000 for the Economic Recovery City Beautification Mural Project.

Background:

Diversity Mural

At the June 30th Regular Council Meeting, Councillor Bhangu made the following Notice of Motion:

That the City work with the current Economic Recovery initiatives and create a culture and diversification mural highlighting the immigrant cultures that helped build Merritt such as the Italian, Punjabi, Sikh, Scottish cultures in their traditional attire, and that this mural be created on a City facility, or available non-City facility pending a moveable mural frame to fit with the Economic Recovery downtown beautification mural project.

At the July 21st meeting, a modified written version was presented. Eventually, the final modified version read for the vote was:

“That the City work with the current economic recovery initiatives and create a culture and diversification mural highlighting the many cultures of Merritt in their cultural attire, past and present.

And That this mural be created on a City facility, or available non-City facility pending a moveable mural frame, to fit with the Economic Recovery downtown beautification mural project”.

The wording “in their cultural attire” was read aloud, but was not in the written version presented prior to Council. Due to the changes between versions, at the August 4th Regular Council Meeting, the motion proposed on July 21st was reconsidered, and Council deferred this decision to the last meeting in September (September 15th) requesting that it come back along with a staff report on the mural projects.

A variety of questions were discussed at previous Council Meetings on the Diversity Mural. At this time staff does not feel, without reallocating staff resources and gathering community input, a formal project plan for this mural can be provided. This new Diversity Mural was not originally included in the 2020 Action Plan and would be a new item requiring additional staff time to complete.

Sports and Recreation Mural

The City of Merritt received a \$10,000 grant from the Rural Dividend Fund for a Sports and Recreation Mural on the Nicola Valley Memorial Arena (NVMA). In 2019, this mural project was brought forward and approved for the NVMA location and the design changed from a country artist mural to a sports mural. Regarding all new murals being discussed, this Sports and Recreation Mural is currently first in the queue and is set to be completed before proceeding to new murals.

Nicola Valley Arts Council - City Downtown Beautification Mural Project

During the August 18th Regular Council Meeting, the Nicola Valley Arts Council (NVAC) presented on the City Downtown Beautification Mural project and ways the NVAC could support.

The NVAC asked the City Council for \$5,000 to support local artists. The NVAC along with City Staff and community organizations have agreed on the theme of local nature, plants, and animals for the additional murals and public art in downtown Merritt. This proposed Street Art Initiative is scheduled to include street, crosswalk and sidewalk painting, murals, and window dressing. The City of Merritt would provide mural guidelines and require mural permits to be completed with fees waived. A list of locations for potential new murals is currently being compiled.

Council voted “That Council consider the Arts Council request on September 1st, 2020 instead of September 15th, 2020.” This motion was defeated for the September 1st Special Meeting of Council and the item was requested to be brought forward for consideration at the Regular Meeting on September 15th.

There is currently \$14,808 remaining in the Council Contingency fund. In comparison, the Merritt and District Chamber of Commerce requested and received \$5,000 to assist with the Shop Local portion of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Initiatives. To date, \$400 has been spent in the Shop Local Campaign. This funding was provided from the Council Contingency line item.

Options / discussion

1. THAT Council provides the Nicola Valley Arts Council with \$5,000 for the Economic Recovery City Beautification Mural Project.
2. THAT Council provides the Nicola Valley Arts Council with \$10,000 for the Economic Recovery City Beautification Mural Project to match the funding currently being spent on the Sports and Recreation Mural.
3. THAT Council receives this report for information.

Financial / Risk Implications:

\$5,000 is currently being requested for the Nicola Valley Arts Council to assist the City of Merritt with the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Mural Initiative. Additional staff time would also be required to complete this project.

Others Consulted:

- Nicola Valley Arts Council

Attachments:

- COVID-19 Economic Recovery Brochure

Respectfully submitted,

Will George
Economic Development, Communications and Tourism Manager