

NO: R156

COUNCIL DATE: October 16, 2023

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **October 11, 2023**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**

FILE: **0550 - 01**

SUBJECT: **Recommended Public Art for Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Authorize staff to contract Leslie Wells to complete a public artwork at Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House, as generally described in this report and attached as Appendix "I".

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval to proceed with the implementation of Leslie Wells' artwork design for Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House.

BACKGROUND

Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House is a new civic cultural facility that provides dedicated space to support Indigenous cultural practices, including carving and other creative disciplines. The unique venue includes enclosed studio space, as well as an open-air pavilion to support additional programming and gathering. The public art opportunity is a creative enhancement of the open-air pavilion above the main entrance of the studio space. Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House was officially opened in June of this year. An image of the proposed site is attached as Appendix "II." The site of the artwork was determined by the project team.

DISCUSSION

Given the intended goals and use of the facility, as well as its location in Semiahmoo First Nation's traditional territory, the public art opportunity was a directed call to artists from Semiahmoo First Nation. Leslie Wells was selected for the commission per Semiahmoo protocol. The artist prepared a concept sketch for his intended wood-carving. The artwork is expected to be complete in Spring 2024 and will be mounted within the pavilion of the new facility.

About The Artist & Artwork

Leslie Wells is an artist of Semiahmoo First Nation who creates carvings, paintings, jewellery, and prints. He has apprenticed with Haida artist Robert Davidson, assisting him on a house post that now resides in White Rock. In 2008, Wells graduated from the Northwest Coast Jewellery Arts Program at the Native Education College in Vancouver led by Kwakwaka'wakw/Haida artist Dan Wallace.

The artwork design depicts the sun and will be a painted cedar wood carving. Inspiration for the artwork comes from the artist's traditional name which comes from his eighth great-grandfather and means 'sun.' It will be approximately 4.5' to 5' in diameter.

FUNDING

Funding for this public art project draws from 1.25% of civic monies from the construction of Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House and is augmented by public art reserve funds for South Surrey. Total costs for the project are \$60,000 including artist fees, fabrication, engineering, installation, and future maintenance requirements.

CONCLUSION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommends Council authorize staff to contract Leslie Wells to implement a public artwork at Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House, as generally described in this report.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Appendix: "I" – Recommended public artwork by Leslie Wells
Appendix: "II" – Proposed Artwork Location: Totest Aleng open-air pavilion

APPENDIX "I"

Recommended public artwork by Leslie Wells



Concept Sketch of Carving for Pavilion Space

APPENDIX "II"

Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House – Open-Air Pavilion

