



REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: CS-BRD-334

From: Community Services

Date: July 18, 2024

Subject: Don Nearhood Collection – Options for Relocation and Disposal

RECOMMENDATION: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board authorize the public disbursement of the Don Nearhood Collection through Gov Deals, in alignment with the Board’s Asset Disposal Policy.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On June 13, 2024, the Electoral Area Directors Committee passed the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Electoral Area Directors Committee recommend that the Regional Board authorize staff to bring back options for relocation and/or disposal of the Don Nearhood Museum Collection to the July 18, 2024 Regional Board meeting for decision.

The Don Nearhood Museum collection was handcrafted by Don Nearhood, a resident of Buick, BC. It is made up of three miniature collections: a logging collection, an agricultural collection, and other historically significant replicas from the pioneer era. In 1996, the Peace River Regional District purchased the Don Nearhood Museum collection for the sum of \$20,000 using Area ‘B’ and Area ‘C’ Grant-in-Aid Funding. BC Hydro agreed to house most of the pieces at the Peace Canyon Visitor Centre at that time. However, the Peace Canyon Visitor Centre has subsequently closed, and the exhibits are no longer open for public viewing. BC Hydro has agreed to house the collection until such time as the Regional District can find an alternate location.

On May 28, 2020, a Director’s Report (linked below) was brought forward for consideration, and the Regional Board passed the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board authorize staff to meet with historical societies in the Regional District to discuss the proposed relocation of the Don Nearhood Museum, and the necessary methods used for the safe preservation and transportation of its collections

On May 26, 2022 various Board members and staff toured the Don Nearhood Museum. On June 14, 2022 the Electoral Area Director’s Committee passed the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board authorize that a report be prepared examining options to display the Don Nearhood Museum in various locations throughout the region; further; that the report include the Buick Community as an option.

Options for Relocation:

Since 2022, staff has contacted several museums and Historical Societies (located in Pouce Coupe, Hudson's Hope, Tumbler Ridge, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, and Beaverlodge), other organizations (North Peace Regional Airport) and member municipalities to investigate alternative locations for all or parts of the collection. To this date, although there are funds budgeted for the relocation of the Don Nearhood Museum collection, all options to donate or rehome all or part of the collection have been exhausted.

Staff also reached out to community representatives in Buick Creek, who reported that there was no public space in the community to house a portion or all the collection. The community of Buick also noted in recent correspondence that Don Nearhood's family were not interested; thanked the Regional District for their consideration and said they hoped that the collection was able to find a good home.

As there is no perceived interest in all or a portion of this Collection, the options available for the Collection's future are listed below.

Options for Disposal:

Both the Alberta Museums Association and the Royal BC Museum have a deaccessioning policy, intended to guide disposition of museum assets. The methods of collection disposal are listed as follows (ranked in order of preference):

1. Gift, sale, trade, or transfer to a non-profit organization/museum or public institution
2. Repatriate to originating community
3. Sale at public auction
4. Destruction as a last resort

As the first two options have been deemed not possible through multiple attempts, the available options are to look at selling the Don Nearhood collection at public auction or the destruction of the entire collection, as a last resort.

Sale at Public Auction:

While the Don Nearhood collection has historical and intrinsic community value, the actual value of the asset is perceived as minimal. Should the Board support the recommendation to authorize the sale of the Collection at public auction for fair market value, staff will post the Collection as a whole to public auction for a period of 3 weeks. Should the Collection not be purchased, the collection will be separated into categories (logging, agricultural, and other historical replicas), and re-posted for a further 3-week term. Should the Collection be purchased through the auction the collection is intended to be picked up by the successful buyer, and staff will coordinate access with BC Hydro.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- Asset and Infrastructure Management

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

On February 22, 2023, as part of the approval of the Regional Recreation Draft Budget in 2023, the following resolution was passed:

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board include the 2023 supplemental request for costs to relocate the Don Nearhood Museum collection from the Peace Canyon Dam to a new facility(s) totalling \$50,000 for Function 220 – Regional Recreation in the 2023 Financial Plan.

The Don Nearhood Museum collection is very large, both in size and number of pieces. The supplemental request approved included a total of \$50,000 for costs to relocate the collection. Any costs related to the Board’s direction for the auction of this Collection, including staff time, and vehicle use will be funded through the above-mentioned allocation out of Function 220 – Regional Recreation.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

Attachments:

1. 1996 Memo_Purchase of Don Nearhood Collection

External Links:

1. Director’s Report DR-BRD-002 dated May 19, 2020 re: Don Nearhood Museum – See Agenda [Item #10.1](#)