



# Memorandum

vancouver school board



Date: February 15, 2017

**ITEM 1**

To: Committee II - Planning and Facilities – Public

From: Jim Meschino, Director of Facilities

Re: General Gordon Yellow Outbuilding

## INTRODUCTION

This report contains a recommendation.

## BACKGROUND

At Committee II Public Session on March 7, 2016, staff brought forward an information report regarding Options for the General Gordon Yellow Outbuilding.

### These options were as follows:

**Option 1** – Demolish and Proceed as Planned – Proceed with the project as planned and as scheduled to demolish the yellow outbuilding as per the Development Permit and Construction schedule for the completion of Gordon Elementary School.

**Option 2** – Retain Building for Other Use – Retain the outbuilding on site and consider its use for childcare or other use

**Option 3** – Relocate off- site – Issue an expression of interest wanting to take the building off-site.

At the Board Public Session on March 7, 2016, the Board passed the following motion with respect to Option 2:

That the Board direct staff to issue an Expression of Interest (EOI) by March 20, 2016, which closes April 20, 2016 for proponents to submit a proposal that retains and restores the General Gordon Yellow Schoolhouse outbuilding. As a condition of the EOI, the proponents shall reimburse the Vancouver School Board (VSB) for any incremental costs incurred as defined in the EOI, and shall assume responsibility for all costs of planning, restoring, and future maintenance of the outbuilding in accordance with uses approved by the VSB and the City of Vancouver.

That the Board authorize the demolition of the General Gordon Yellow Schoolhouse outbuilding if: a) the “option2- Retain Building for Other Use” jeopardizes occupancy of the school for September 2016, or b) no acceptable proposals are received by April 20\*,

2016 (as deemed acceptable to the VSB). As the case may be, staff are directed to notify the Board and communicate impropriety prior to the outbuilding being demolished.

\*Note: the Board extended the deadline of April 20, 2016 to May 10, 2016 at a following Board meeting.

## DISCUSSION

In March of 2016, the VSB issued a Request for Expression of Interest and Proposal (RFEIP) to Retain, Lease and Restore General Gordon Elementary Yellow Outbuilding on BC Bid. The closing date was April 20, 2016 as per the prior Board motion.

### **The proposals received were as follows in no specific order:**

1. For-profit pre-school Montessori
2. Youth Centre
3. Independent Montessori School
4. Museum/Community Centre

### **Process to date:**

A committee, with representation from the City of Vancouver, convened to review the proposals received. As part of the review process, all of the proponents attended individual meetings with representatives of the committee to discuss the merits of their proposal and to elaborate on financial resources available to implement their proposal. Following a thorough review of the proposals and meetings with each of the proponents, it was determined that three of the four proposals did not meet the requirements of the RFEIP. One of the proposals however did have a strong proposal that generally met the requirements of the RFEIP.

Negotiations with the single proponent commenced which including meetings with the City of Vancouver to determine what would be required with respect to process, permits, and new infrastructure to reuse the building.

The City identified the following process:

The proponent would need to apply for a separate development permit and building permit. This would include public consultation following submission of a development permit. The City would then render a decision on issuance of a Development Permit based on a number of factors including public consultation. The proponent would need to engage consultants including traffic management plan to submit for a Development Permit.

The City identified the following new infrastructure:

- A new hydrant would be required at the lane adjacent to the yellow building.
- New services would likely be required such as water, hydro, natural gas, storm and sanitary lines to the yellow building.
- A new address for the building would be required.
- Lane widening completion as per the original Development Permit conditions.

## **Results of the Request for Expression of Interest Proposals:**

After several months of good faith negotiations, conversations came to an impasse and the proponent made the decision to end negotiations. The proponent formally decided to withdraw its proposal for reuse of the yellow building in late December 2016.

All proponents to lease the building either have withdrawn their proposal or deemed ineligible. Staff are proposing to the Board to demolish the building, complete the lane widening, and to convert the space occupied by the building to playground space for the school.

## **Rational why staff is recommending demolishing the building:**

The building is in very poor condition and past its useful life. There would need to be a significant investment to make the building reusable.

The school site is smaller than Ministry standards for the capacity of the school. The VSB has received letters from the school community that the space occupied by the yellow outbuilding would be better suited as outdoor play space.

The Board's motion was clear that the building was to be demolished unless a suitable lease proponent came forward as part of the Request for Expression of Interest.

The City is holding a letter of credit from the VSB of \$180,000 for completion of the lane widening. In order to complete the lane widening and to return the grounds to school use, it is recommended that the outbuilding be demolished at the same time.

## **ISSUES**

While the outbuilding is not a particularly good example of any architectural period style, it does represent sentimental value to some because of its age and past use on the Gordon Elementary school site. It would be appropriate to recognize the building for future generations through installation of a plaque and acknowledgment of the original location of the outbuilding.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT** staff proceed in accordance with the March 7, 2016 Board motion to demolish the yellow outbuilding.