Presentation by Alain Laurencelle, President of Le Jardin de Sculptures (the St. Boniface and City of Winnipeg Sculpture Garden)
February 16, 2022

Agenda Item: REPORT 'A' OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT, HERITAGE AND DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DATED JANUARY 17, 2022 1. List of Historical Resources - Nomination of St. Boniface Police Station/Jail/County Courthouse, 227 Provencher Boulevard

Le Jardin de Sculptures and La Maison des Artistes Art Gallery, both longstanding reputable tenants who call the St. Boniface Civic Square --HOME, are IN FAVOUR with the recommendation of the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee - That the St. Boniface Health Unit Building 233 Provencher Blvd., the Police Station/Jail/County Courthouse and 227 Provencher Boulevard, be added to the List of Historical Resources.

This is clearly a heritage site that is dear to not only St. Boniface, but emblematic of La Francophonie in Manitoba. It is a location that speaks to our roots as well as the progress that has been made socially, culturally and artistically in our great City of Winnipeg over 100+ years. These heritage buildings represent minority francophone and metis communities, but these are strong minorities and add immeasurable value both culturally and economically to our City and Province.

Winnipeg can do more to preserve the best of its past (which these buildings are, along with the St. Boniface City all) *while engaging in dynamic growth*. Those two goals are not at odds with each other. This was and still is the vision of the Sculpture Garden---STARTED 25 YEARS AGO, it's a shining, *concrete* and very visible example of a successful Private and Public Partnership between Les Amis des arts visuels du Manitoba (as the foundation, owner of the sculptures and custodian of the grounds) and the City of Winnipeg (as Landlord), with the support of the Province and Federal government. Our World Class Sculpture Garden (a community investment of over $1.2M) carried out with the highest aesthetic standards is contributing, in symbiosis with these rich historic resources, to the cultural and economic *dynamic growth* of the civic square where there is space for everyone---community as well as thriving businesses.

Let's all remember that the St. Boniface civic square was chosen by the Franco-Manitoban community and the City of Winnipeg as the site for the Sculpture Garden specifically because of its rich architectural and cultural heritage. To have put the Sculpture Garden in Provencher Park, Whittier Park, LaVérendrye Park or any other place in St. Boniface was unthinkable. In his September 2021 letter to the Standing Policy Committee of Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development, University of Manitoba Art History Professor Oliver Botar made the following observations: "the Sculpture Garden matches, and *successfully repurposes*, the historical and architectural quality of the civic square facing Provencher Boulevard. Removing or altering any part of it (the complex) would irrevocably damage the urban fabric of its surroundings". We must keep in mind the site of the Sculpture Garden is located in the heart of the unique French Quarter, in a highly visible and trafficked area on Provencher Boulevard, and on well-known historical and cultural corridors (starting with the Forks, the St. Boniface Museum, La Cathédral, the resting place of Louis Riel, the St. Boniface Université, the St. Boniface City Hall and civic square buildings, the Cultural Centre, the Historical Society of St. Boniface…just to name a few—all within walking distance).

La Maison des artistes and Les Amis du Jardin de sculptures have met with the potential new owners of the historical St. Boniface Town Hall, Manitoba Possible, as well as representatives for Dr. Frechette. From those conversations a very positive take away was derived by all parties with enthusiasm and a spirit of mutual collaboration. The police station, after so many years of back and forth between its private owners and the City, is now the question which is causing much argument.

We understand the financial implications of an empty building which was bought under what we understand as a future community development- a health clinic. And discussions between La Maison and the Frechette family at the beginning of the 2020 proved to be positive with many integrated and community minded designs by Nicolas Frechette to develop the old police station into a francophone business center and health facility. Again, La Maison and the Garden were respectfully considered and consulted. We have always been willing and open to working with our neighbours.

The integrity of the entire civic square of which the Sculpture Garden is a large part of occupying over 50% of the total land, is the heart of the civic square. And what happens to the buildings has direct effect on the Garden. The Sculpture Garden is a living and dynamic space where community comes together through art, concerts, community events, guided tours, picnics and much more.

(Insert Appendix A)

Everyone has worked hard to bring three levels of government funding to develop the existing world class sculptures and to maintain the upkeep of the garden since its inception. It is for this reason that all the buildings that envelope the garden on all three sides are protected, including the Police Station. The Garden is an asset for future generations and the use of the surrounding award-winning architecture is integral to the whole.

Les Amis du Jardin will work with respective owners to incorporate any vision within the architectural context into our own long-term plans, including the Police Station. The Police Station is an important piece of the puzzle that if removed-- or changed in any way-- will throw off the equilibrium of an established garden with mature trees and shrubs as well as potentially impact access and visual points to the historic St. Boniface Town Hall and the Sculpture Garden.

As well and to be noted, the Garden's and La Maison's long-term plans including upgrade signage, new gates, a new sculptural commission, an expansion of offices and gallery, are well under way. But for this to happen, there needs to be clarity and willingness to cooperate from all parties. We have brought up the issue of property lines on several occasions, to which we have not received any answers or definitive survey plans. What people have to appreciate is that the Sculpture Garden was never conceived, nor was it developed, to respect boundary lines—it literally takes up as much of the green space as possible and, in some cases, only a few feet away from the civic square buildings--The following photos show the problems which are not solved:

(Insert Appendix B- Garden Plan)



1. Existing accessibility Parking



2. Tenant parking and existing accessibility parking (on the right)
   Accessibility and elevator entrance (on the left)



3. Existing heating and electrical units



4. Concert canopy adjacent to Police Station

These issues, as well as the prospect of significantly impacting an established Sculpture Garden unique in Francophone Canada and the City of Winnipeg should factor into your decisions today. With all respect to all parties, we strongly support the historical designation of these buildings, and their external elevations and architectural references.

Thank you / Merci! I would be pleased to take any questions.