

PORT OF SEATTLE
MEMORANDUM

COMMISSION AGENDA
ACTION ITEM

Item No. 6a
Date of Meeting April 10, 2012

DATE: March 30, 2012
TO: Tay Yoshitani, Chief Executive Officer
FROM: Mike McLaughlin, Director, Cruise and Maritime Operations
SUBJECT: First Reading and Public Hearing of Resolution No. 3661 surplusing certain personal property and conveying title and permanent custody of artifacts to the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture

Cost to the Port: \$117,045

Source of Funds: Operating Budget

ACTION REQUESTED:

Request First Reading and Public Hearing of Resolution No. 3661: A Resolution of the Port Commission of the Port of Seattle declaring certain personal property surplus and no longer needed for Port purposes, authorizing its transfer to the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, and authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to execute all documents related to such transfer. The Port will make a one-time payment of \$117,045 to the Burke Museum to cover the costs of professional packaging, storage, and cataloging of the materials.

SYNOPSIS:

This action would convey title and authorize the permanent transfer of custody of certain Native American artifacts to the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture.

BACKGROUND:

For more than 20 years, the Port of Seattle has been responsible for the storage and preservation of materials excavated from Native American archaeological sites during Port construction operations.

Following discussions with the recognized Tribes, the Port entered into agreements with the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture at the University of Washington for professional care and curation of the materials collected. As part of its responsibility, the Burke Museum has made certain materials available for academic study and community display.

The materials held by the Burke Museum include:

- Duwamish No. 1 site: Archaeological excavations in 1976 and 1978 near the Port's Terminal 107 produced 82 cubic feet of material. In 1986, excavations for a Metro wastewater project near Terminal 107 produced another 67 cubic feet of material. The collections include artifacts from stone and bone, a ceramic shard and samples of shell, soil and stone.

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- Port of Seattle World Trade Center Site: Excavation of material at the site on the Elliott Bay waterfront produced six cubic feet of material.

The Port pays for the storage on an annual contract basis with the Museum. The Museum has in some instances repackaged the materials as necessary, although substantial work is needed to complete the effort and better preserve the materials.

The Port wishes to make permanent disposition of the materials through an interlocal agreement to convey permanent custody and title to the Burke Museum. Our goal is to establish a long-term agreement that secures the proper storage of the materials, respects the interest of the Native American tribes and mitigates the expense to the Port.

The Museum has agreed to take custody of the materials. The Museum is the only institution in the region that meets the standards specified in 36 CFR, Part 79 (curation of Federally-Owned and Administered Archaeological Collections).

As part of the agreement, the Port will make a one-time payment of \$117,045 to cover the costs of professional packaging, storage, and cataloging of the materials.

In transferring permanent custody of the Collection to the Museum, the Port intends that these materials will remain readily available to the Tribes for inspection, research and other purposes as is mutually agreeable by the Tribes and the Museum.

The Commission is asked to declare that the archaeological materials are surplus personal property that is no longer needed for port district purposes. Because the cost to convey title and permanent custody of the materials to the Burke Museum exceeds \$10,000, the Commission is also asked to approve by resolution the conveyance of title and custody of the materials to the Burke Museum.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:

Transferring custody of the materials will ensure the permanent and professional curation of the materials as required by federal law; ensure the materials are available for research and study; and reduce Port expense.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS:

Continue current annual agreement with the Burke Museum: Cost for storing the artifacts is approximately \$11,000 annually but the materials are in need of proper packaging and cataloging. Cost will likely escalate over time. This alternative is not recommended.

OTHER DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS REQUEST:

- Resolution No. 3661 with interlocal agreement, inventory of artifacts, and Burke Museum transfer of ownership form.
- Letter to Muckleshoot and Suquamish Tribal Council Chairs dated June 1, 2011.
- Letter to Muckleshoot and Suquamish Tribal Council Chairs dated March 26, 2012.

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PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS:

None.