



City of New Bedford

Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development

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STAFF REPORT

NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

December 7, 2015

LOCATION: 18 Johnny Cake Hill-Whaling Museum Plaza

APPLICANT: Whaling Museum

OVERVIEW: The Whaling Museum is currently soliciting RFP's for contractors interested in designing, fabricating, and installing a North Atlantic right whale themed fountain in the plaza outside the main entrance to the Museum. The applicant is seeking the Commissions' input regarding the project.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The plaza is the main entry into the museum and is located at the corner of William Street and Johnny Cake Hill. The bluestone plaza is visually open to William Street and Johnny Cake Hill.

PROPOSAL: The installation of a North Atlantic right whale themed fountain which will disperse the spray appropriate to the blow patterns of a real whale. **See Whaling Museum RFP.**

STATEMENT OF APPLICABLE GUIDELINES: The Bedford Landing District Design Guidelines states the following:
PUBLIC ART AND MURALS: The addition of public art in outdoor spaces and the painting of murals on the exterior walls of buildings should be created in active response to the character and history of the site. Public art needs to be appropriate in scale to the district and placed so that it does not diminish the historic character of the associated properties or the district. Public art should represent high standards of design and execution and should consider issues of maintenance and longevity.

FOR BOARD MEMBER CONSIDERATION: The Commission is reviewing the RFP for the whale themed fountain and not the actual design submission, which will require future Commission approval and a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Commission has given approval to temporary art, and the fountain can be reviewed as an art installation. The Commission can assist the Whaling Museum by providing standards to be considered for a fountain which will complement the District's setting.



STAFF RECOMMENDATION: In addition to the public art standards found in the Bedford Landing District Design Guidelines, staff offers the following guidelines:

- The fountain must respect the historic setting of the shared landscape of the District (scale, massing);
- The fountain should not obscure the architectural features or detract from the historical, architectural and design context of the site and surrounding area;
- The method of installation should not damage historic fabric;
- Maintenance requirements must be met.