

Former mayor wants wharf area restored

By Bill Power
Staff Reporter

For a century, summer fun-seeking Haligonians boarded the ferry on the city-side of the Northwest Arm and headed for a day at the Dingle. It is a tradition former mayor Leonard A. Kitz wants restored.

The prominent Halifax lawyer has launched an all-out campaign to save the dilapidated wharf at the western extremity of Oakland Road that up to about 20-years ago served as a landing for the ferry to the Dingle, and was a popular recreation area in its own right.

Mr. Kitz admitted during a news briefing Thursday he has deep sentimental feelings about the long-neglected landing site, which was closed by the city about 18-months ago. And he told city council Thursday evening he feels many people in the area feel the same way.

With this in mind, he has petitioned the city to rehabilitate the structure, rather than spend more to demolish it, and bring back to the community a once valuable recreational amenity.

For 30 years Mr. Kitz lived immediately north of the small parcel of land containing the wharf, and he longs for the days when children and adults enjoyed the swimming, when yachtsmen and canoeists visited the site to drop-off and pick-up passengers, while others picnicked and still others stretched-out on the wharf to enjoy the sunshine and observe the many related cayside activities, including fishing.

His petition notes the wharf-site thrusts slightly west, providing easy view up and down the expanse of the arm.

The site, immediately opposite Memorial Tower and Fleming Park, long recognized as a vantage point for painters, photographers and sightseers, could be lost forever unless the city takes action, he said.

"It appalls me to think the city is considering demolishing what remains of the wharf. I call it an act of municipal vandalism."

According to the one-time mayor, other neighbours to the Oakland Road site have mixed feelings about a possible resurgence of activity in the area. However, he dismissed arguments against the

proposal as inconsiderate and unfounded.

"The local alderman has apparently looked into the situation, but I'd say he talked to the people in the box-seats, rather than those in the bleachers. People throughout the city would enjoy the facility if it was restored."

According to Mr. Kitz, parking would not be a problem since about 15-20 cars, at most, would be involved at peak periods. Related fears of vandalism or rowdiness hold even less water, he said, because for the 30-years he has lived in the area there has never been a problem.

And people concerned about cost, should consider demolition will likely cost a few thousands dollars more, he said.

Rather than demolishing this "historic amenity," Mr. Kitz proposes about \$7,500-\$10,000 be spent repairing the wharf deck, reconstructing and building additional steps, and sprucing-up the adjacent shore.

"Every piece of waterfront property in this city is precious, it is absurd to abandon this one," he said.

Council tabled Mr. Kitz's petition and agreed to further investigation.

Letter to Hon. 5/4/89
City of Halifax 9/21/89



RESTORATION SOUGHT — Former Halifax mayor Leonard Kitz surveys the dilapidated wharf he has asked the city to restore for the use of boats and sightseers on the Northwest Arm. The prominent lawyer presented a petition last night asking city council to save the wharf, located opposite the Dingle Tower in Fleming Park, and said demolition of the structure would be "an act of municipal vandalism."

Wanboldt-Winterfeld