



To: Council
From: Kevin Amelotte
Date of Meeting: October 30, 2019
Subject: Raisin Region Heritage Centre

Background:

As an outcome of the regular meeting of Council on February 20, 2019, staff was directed to host a public consultation session in order to provide more information and to collect any suggestions from residents or community associations.

A public consultation session was held on April 17, 2019 at Station 4 Fire Hall in St. Andrews West. Staff used a variety of advertising methods to inform the public and worked with the Cornwall Township Historical Society and the St. Andrews Catholic Church to raise awareness that the Township was looking for public opinion on this issue. Not including staff and Council members, there was a recorded 20 members of the general public in attendance. There was a variety of comments/suggestion recorded by staff during this event. Members of the public were also encouraged to submit any suggestions for the future of the buildings to the Director of Parks and Recreation, staff received an additional three (3) letters prior to the consultation session.

Comments from the public varied, some in favour of the Township restoring the facility but did not offer a suitable business plan to support the options, while others did not want to see tax dollars spent on repairs but did express concerns of finding an option to properly store or display the artifacts that are currently in the building. The final suggestion was to remove the building but construct a monument using bricks and statues from the building as a way of preserving the legacy of the facility.

Staff has recently received an informal proposal from a member of the community indicating that there is a small group of local investors that would like to take ownership of the building and the responsibility of environmental clean-up for the purpose of maintaining the building as a public space. Subsequently, staff reached out for legal advice if the Township would like to sell this building "as is" and what the liability would be to the Corporation in the future. This appears to be an option that could be pursued further but could require some significant professional fees to review all potential scenarios and evaluate if sale of the property is a viable option.

Due to the location of the property within the St. Andrews Catholic School grounds, staff has reached out to the CDSBEO in order to have further discussion about the options presented to Council for this facility and the potential impact to the operation of the school. There is also an expired agreement between the two organizations for seasonal snow removal and salting around the School and Heritage Centre property that needs to be reviewed before the upcoming winter season. CDSBEO staff were provided all of the information and were requested to

meet with the Township prior to October 30, 2019. CDSBEO were forced to cancel a meeting originally scheduled for October 24 and provide the Township with a new meeting date for November 6.

Discussion:

There are three (3) potential options that can be considered for the future of the Raisin Region Heritage Centre;

- 1. Transfer Ownership:** This option would require more research in order to determine if this is a legally sound option. If so, it would be the most cost-effective solution and could eliminate future liability to the Corporation. Unfortunately, the Township was not able to secure a meeting with the CDSBEO prior to this report, at this time it is the opinion of staff that this option would present some challenges for the operation of the school. A sale of the property might not address any concerns regarding the future storage of artifacts that are currently located in the building.

- 2. Demolition of the Building:** The estimate received in 2017 for the demolition of the building was approximately \$700,000.00, staff is suggesting that with cost-of-living increases and other costs that were excluded from the estimate that there is potential that this number will be higher to complete the project. This option would be a one-time cost to complete and would release any further liability or budget requirements to the Corporation. A proper RFP would need to be issued to get a final cost estimate. Demolition of the building and restoration of the grounds will not address any concerns regarding the future storage of artifacts that are currently located in the building.

- 3. Restoration of the Building:** The Class D Estimate provided by engineers in 2017 to repair the building and safely open the facility for use on the main level is approximately \$540,000.00 (excluding applicable taxes). It was also noted that this amount would not be enough to complete renovations to open the facility and meet standards for accessibility, emergency evacuation, fire code, or ensure that the building would remain free from nuisance critters such as bats. It was suggested in 2017 to do a full clean and restoration of this facility for public use, this could reach closer to \$1,500,000.00. Staff has not had success finding any grants that would cover the cost of restoration without being able to provide a solid business case for the future use and viability of the building. Renovation of the building would also require a continued commitment for annual maintenance budget at this location.

Staff is currently preparing for 2020 budget deliberations and are looking for the guidance of Council on what options should be pursued.