

Township of South Stormont
ACTION REQUEST
Parks and Recreation Department



To: Council
From: Kevin Amelotte
Date of Meeting: February 20, 2019
Subject: Raisin Region Heritage Centre

Recommendation:

That Council directs staff to organize a public consultation session to outline the current condition of the Raisin Region Heritage Centre and to obtain comments/suggestions from members of the public on any potential options for the future of the facility. Furthermore, that a secondary inspection of the exterior of the building be completed to ensure the structure does not require any immediate repairs that could compromise the health and safety of those who are approaching the exterior and/or occupying the building.

Background:

1908 – St. Andrews West Convent is constructed and operated as a convent and educational facility.

1978 – The Convent is no longer active and is slated for demolition. The Cornwall Township Historical Society (CTHS) was formed and worked with the Township to purchase the building and recognize the facility as a heritage building. The application was successful, the facility was designated as a “property of historical value” under the Heritage Act of Ontario, 1974, Chapter 122. Over the next 40 years the building was used for a variety of functions including a headquarters and museum by the CTHS, a community hall, and a library operated by the United Counties of SD&G.

2016 – Township hired an engineering firm to conduct a legislated Designated Substance Reports for all Township owned facilities. Report outlined presence of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) (72 samples) and many other designated substances such as lead, mercury, silica, and mould. Areas of immediate concern are located on the third floor and basement and not accessible to the general public. Meeting was held with representative of the CTHS, Township general contractor, and Township staff to review the report and perform training to ensure proper steps are followed during any renovation to the facility.

2017 – Following a routine staff inspection of the exterior of the facility, staff presented a report to Council outlining potential health and safety concerns with the facility and obtained approval to hire an Engineering firm to produce a Building Conditions Report (BCR). The BCR outlined 36 areas of the building that were found to be in poor condition. Another 5 areas of general concerns include issues around barrier free accessibility, renovation not conforming with heritage standards, proximity of the building to the CDSBEO property, inadequate or missing emergency building exiting, and the importance of following the DSR for any future renovations. The BCR was provided to the CTHS, Township Insurance Broker, and the CDSBEO. It was also noted that the Township only owns 5' around the perimeter of the building with a small easement leading to the entrance of the building.

Staff immediately implemented an action plan to minimize the liability to the Township and protect the health and safety of those who are approaching the exterior and/or occupying the RRHC. These actions included a non-occupancy order, removal of bricks from several chimneys, reattach anchorage for electrical service, and place fencing to keep the public from accessing potentially dangerous areas.

Engineers were hired to provide a Class D estimate to address all 36 areas of concerns in the BCR. The estimate to reinstate the facility for public use on the first floor, without any consideration for accessibility standards, emergency exiting, or any upgrades is listed at \$541,616.00 (2017 dollars, excluding applicable taxes).

2018 – Mayor Bancroft presents the findings of the BCR and Class D estimate at a general meeting of the CTHS and suggests that members meet with staff to review any potential options for future use.

Staff research potential grants for the facility and discuss potential options with the Associate Director of Education for the CDSBEO. Grants for renovation all require a business plan that demonstrates a clear understanding of the use/need of the facility and how it will be sustainable in the future. The CDSBEO shows no interest in purchasing the facility and want to make sure that the building does not pose a health and safety concerns for their students or staff.

Staff meet with the members of the CTHS to review all reports and research and collectively are unable to generate any options that could be used to build a solid business plan for the use of the facility.

Staff obtained the services of a contractor to inspect the building and review the findings of both the DSR and BCR. The contractor provided staff with a quote for demolition as another potential option for consideration. The quote provided was \$698,800.00 (excluding applicable taxes) but does not include the removal of tanks, relocation of hydro, air testing, permits, removal of any contaminated soil, etc.

Options:

1. That Council direct staff to organize a public consultation session to outline the current condition of the Raisin Region Heritage Centre and to obtain comments/suggestions from members of the public on any potential options for the future of the facility. Furthermore, that a secondary inspection of the exterior of the building be completed to ensure the structure does not require any immediate repairs that could compromise the health and safety of those who are approaching the exterior and/or occupying the building.

2. Council denies the request to hold a public consultation session and directs staff to prepare recommendations for the future of the Raisin Region Heritage Centre.

3. Other.

Financial Impact:

The 2019 operations budget includes \$8,000.00 for inspection of the exterior of the building and minor repairs as needed.

Others Consulted:

- Senior Management Team (Township Staff)
- WSP Engineering
- Demolition Plus
- CDSBEO Associate Director of Education
- Cornwall Township Historical Society