

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL

OBJECTIVE

To provide Council with information re. the Canada Community Revitalization Fund application for 14 Elizabeth Walk

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report of the Special Projects manager dated July 15, 2021 be received;

AND THAT Council direct staff to apply for the Canada Community Revitalization Fund in order to upgrade 14 Elizabeth Walk for usage by art and community groups.

AND THAT Council direct staff, if approved for the Canada Community Revitalization Fund, to proceed with renovating the building at 14 Elizabeth Walk to serve as an arts center as outlined in this report.



Steve Antunes
Special Projects Manager



Natalie Bray
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

BACKGROUND

The former Reel to Reel Cinema located at 14 Elizabeth walk was assumed by the City in 2017. In 2018, roof work was done on the building. In 2020, an inspection was completed on the roof and it was deemed structurally sound in order to install repurposed HVAC units. As per the MET report, in regards to the roof and HVAC units, “both of these elements are in great condition”. The report further notes that “Generally, the building is in very poor condition. Aside from the new roof and rooftop units, virtually all parts of the building need a major overhaul and update.” And “...renovations need to be carried out to bring the facility up to present codes and fire standards and ensure that it can be used safely well into the future.”

Arts groups in Elliot Lake who called the Lester B. Pearson Civic Center home have been displaced since the 2019 roof collapse. Groups have been using private residences and rental spaces and other groups have forgone meeting altogether. It is important to note that the pandemic has also been responsible for the limited arts and culture activities in the City.

ANALYSIS

A new Elliot Lake Arts and Culture hub is proposed to open in the former civic center site. A grant application has been submitted and the best case scenario has the center opening in mid to late 2024. Until that point, arts groups and clubs will continue to have no municipal location to practice their crafts.

The proposed Elliot Lake Downtown Arts Center would feature a small theater with stadium seating and ample workspaces for multiple arts groups to practice their crafts in the adjoining room. An elevator up to the second floor would allow access to the bright workspace at the front of the building. The lobby can also feature a small gallery space for the arts groups. Accessibility will be paramount in the renovation of the building.

The renovation of the former theater has been budgeted at \$1,141,250. This cost includes the \$981,250 quoted by Met Energy Systems and an estimated \$160,000 for the installation of an elevator to allow access to the upper floor workshop. Staff are seeking direction to apply for the FEDNOR Canada Community Revitalization Fund that would provide up to \$750,000 of funding. This would leave the City with a cost of \$391,250. Currently the Arts and Culture Fund has \$3,953,358. \$3,500,000 has been allocated to the building of the new facility leaving a balance of \$453,350, which covers the cost of this project.

Renovation of the building would take approximately 10 months. This would have the facility ready for use well before the opening of the new center. Should there be any delays to the building of the new arts center, this building will serve as a spot for the arts groups to continue to operate. Post opening of



the arts center, this building will allow the City extra space to allow the arts community to expand or perhaps allow the municipality to offer new programming to residents.

As the building stands now, it has little value due to the amount of work required. The investment into this building would leave the City with a useable asset well into the future. Further, updating a structure in the downtown core which is vacant and unsightly will add to the appeal of the area and perhaps encourage further investment by surrounding businesses or possibly new investment as the new arts center should increase traffic in the area.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost to the City above the grant will be \$391,250.

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The recommended changes to the committee structure align with the following strategic goals:

- To further develop successful relationships with the diverse and vibrant arts and culture organizations within the community.
- To maintain and improve arts and cultural facilities.

SUMMARY

Staff is recommending that Council direct staff to move forward, if approved for grant funding, with the renovation of 14 Elizabeth Walk.

