

REPORT OF THE MUSEUM CURATOR

Re: Canada Cultural Spaces Fund Application

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the submission of an application for the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund to subsidize the costs for equipment and renovations in the City's arts, heritage, and cultural facilities;

BACKGROUND

The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, offered through the government of Canada, is available to non-profits and municipalities to offset the costs of projects which support the improvement of the physical conditions for art, heritage, and cultural spaces. The Fund supports renovation and construction projects, the acquisition of specialized equipment, and feasibility studies related to cultural spaces.

Elliot Lake has a vibrant and active arts and cultural community and the City has long worked to develop opportunities for artists and to foster an appreciation of arts and culture in its residents through events, public art, and dedicated facilities. Since 2022, the City has been renovating the Downtown Arts Centre, a facility which will host various arts groups in Elliot Lake, supporting their activities, programming, and a gallery. Most recently, on December 11th, 2023, Council approved staff's operational plan of the newly acquired 40 Hillside Drive North facility which incorporates a hybrid museum and performing arts space and cultural storage into the facility. Both of these new arts and cultural spaces are highly anticipated as they will provide much needed homes to groups displaced through the loss of the Civic Centre in 2019. Subsidiary to these venues, the W.H. Collins Hall Centre is frequented for large events involving performing and visual arts. All three of these facilities are in need of upgrades in order to function to their utmost potential and best serve the community.

ANALYSIS

Staff intends to take advantage of the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund opportunity and apply for funding to improve our arts and cultural facilities in Elliot Lake. Of the three, the 40 Hillside Drive North facility will need the most attention as renovations to the building are required to make it accessible and operational. This includes upgrades to the exterior of the building, accessible entryways, and an HVAC system. While there will be less renovations required for the lower level designated as storage, the main floor will need to be retrofitted to accommodate accessible washrooms, museum display, and a

performing arts stage. Specialized equipment needed for this project include mobile display casing, professional storage shelving and cabinets, non-fixed seating, and sound and lighting systems.

While the application will focus heavily on the renovations and equipment needed at the 40 Hillside Drive North property, staff has isolated certain areas of our other arts and cultural facilities which need improvement and will be included in our request for funding.

The renovations of the Downtown Arts Centre are almost complete but a few upgrades are required to improve functionality. Equipment still needed includes kilns, track lighting, and displays for the intended art gallery in the lobby. Minor renovations to the outside of the building are required to fully complete the facility, including a sign with its soon to be determined name.

While the Collins Hall was fitted with very comprehensive sound and lighting units to continue the performing arts programming hosted at the former Civic Centre, the house sound system is failing and in need of replacement. A working sound system is essential as the Collins Hall will continue to host all performing arts events which require a large stage area and increased audience capacities.

With support to pursue this funding opportunity, and designation of signing authority, staff will prepare and submit an application to the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund with the hope to secure this financial assistance needed to open and operate the City's three arts and cultural facilities to their maximum potential.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

If our application for the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund is successful, the City of Elliot Lake would receive funding to subsidize up to 50% of the project's total eligible expenses. Alternate avenues of provincial and federal funding, grants, donations, and fundraising will be sought alongside the Canada Cultural Spaces fund to offset the amount taken from the Arts and Culture reserve to realize this project.

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This project aligns with the City's Strategic Plan to:

- Support the Arts and Culture Community
 - Build a strategic, vibrant, relevant museum for the future
 - Cultivate in the citizens of Elliot Lake an appreciation of arts and culture through accessible programming, arts and cultural facilities, and entertainment that is available to all citizens
 - Maintain and improve arts and cultural facilities

SUMMARY

The Canada Cultural Spaces Fund is extremely competitive but would be an excellent opportunity and resource in realizing our goals to support the arts and cultural community by improving the facilities



which offer members spaces to congregate and operate. Staff is seeking Council's support to apply for this fund in order to upgrade the Downtown Arts Centre and Collins Hall, and to renovate and furnish the 40 Hillside Drive North property, so that all three facilities are optimized and best serving Elliot Lake's arts and culture community, residents, and visitors.

