



AGENDA
Strategic Priorities Committee

Tuesday, October 18, 2016

9:00 am

Council Chambers, Town Hall

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

3. AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Resolution

THAT the October 18, 2016 Strategic Priorities Committee agenda be accepted as presented.

4. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

5. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REVIEW

- 5.1 CAO 45-2016 Future Use and Potential Heritage Designation of 121 Ontario Street (West Ward School)

3

Resolution

THAT CAO 45-2016 Future Use and Potential Heritage Designation of 121 Ontario Street (West Ward School) be received for discussion.

- 5.2 COR 23-2016 Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program, Façade Improvement Program and Heritage Grant Program

22

Resolution

THAT COR 23-2016 Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program, Façade Improvement Program and Heritage Grant Program be received for discussion.

6. NEXT MEETING

7. CLOSED SESSION

7.1 CAO 47-2017 121 Ontario Street Property Appraisal

Resolution

THAT Committee move into a session that is closed to the public at as authorized by Municipal Act Section 239 (2) (c) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board at ____ am.

Resolution

THAT Committee rise from closed session at __ am.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Resolution

That this meeting of the Strategic Priorities Committee adjourn at _____ p.m.



FORMAL REPORT

To: Chair Strathdee and Members of the Strategic Priorities Committee

From: Brent Kittmer, CAO/Clerk

Date of Meeting: 18 October 2016

Subject: **CAO 45-2016 Future Use and Potential Heritage Designation of 121 Ontario Street (West Ward School)**

PURPOSE

The Town is relocating from the current location used for the Early Learning Centre (121 Ontario Street). This report presents information for the Strategic Priorities Committee to review and discuss regarding the future uses or potential sale of the property. This report also presents a recommendation from the Heritage St. Marys Committee to designate the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

At the conclusion of this report staff requires direction on two deliverables:

- What is the preferred future use of 121 Ontario Street (West Ward School)?
- Does the Strategic Priorities Committee recommend to Council to designate 121 Ontario Street (West Ward School)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT CAO 45-2016 Future Use and Potential Heritage Designation of 121 Ontario Street (West Ward School) be received for discussion.

BACKGROUND

The renovation project at Holy Name of Mary School to accommodate the Town's Early Learning Centre is nearing the end, and the Town expects to be operating out of the new site as of January 2017. With the move, there are still two primary outstanding issues to be considered by the Town:

- What to do with the current property (121 Ontario Street) once it has become vacant; and
- How to fund the Town's portion of the capital expenses of the Holy Name of Mary School Renovation project (approximately \$500,000).

When Council formally approved the relocation of the Early Learning Centre the following resolution was passed:

2016-03-01-18

THAT the Town proceed with the relocation of the Early Learning Centre to the Holy Name of Mary site; and

THAT staff be directed to negotiate an agreement with the Huron Perth Catholic School Board to relocate the Early Learning Centre services to Holy Name of Mary School; and

THAT staff report back on the options for selling 121 Ontario Street South as an option to fund the Town's portion of capital costs associated with the relocation, and include a discussion of the Heritage implications.

Of this resolution, only the third statement of direction is outstanding. Also outstanding is a funding plan for the Town's capital costs for the Early Learning Centre relocation. The development of such a plan is contingent on the Town making a decision regarding the sale or retention of the 121 Ontario Street property as any sales revenue for the property would need to be factored into the funding plan. Once Council's preferred option for 121 Ontario Street is determined, staff will return with a recommended funding plan for the Early Learning Centre relocation.

The intent of this report is to present information for the Strategic Priorities Committee to review and discuss regarding the future uses or potential sale of the property. This report also presents a recommendation from the Heritage St. Marys Committee to designate the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

These two topics are presented as two discussion threads below. It is staff's recommendation that the discussion and decision on the future use of the property should be made first, and then the decision on the recommendation heritage designation should be made. The rationale is that the future use of the site could affect Council's approach to supporting or denying the recommendation to designate.

REPORT

Discussion 1: Future Uses and Potential Sale of 121 Ontario Street

The policies and procedures for selling Town land are established in by-law 03-2012. As required in Section 5 of the by-law the first step in selling land is to prepare a comprehensive report to Council. To simplify the organization of this presentation, each of the sub-sections below addresses the requirements of the land sale by-law.

a) Description of the Lands

The lands in question are better known as 121 Ontario Street. The parcel is irregular in shape and is impacted by the flood plain. An aerial map of the lands is shown in Attachment 1 to this report. Attachment 2 to this report is the zoning map for the lands.

The following is a fulsome description of the lands:

Address: 121 Ontario Street South

Description: Lots 14 to 20, inclusive west side of Thomas Street, Lots 16 to 20, inclusive east side of Ontario Street, Registered Plan No. 235

Size: 0.92 hectares

Official Plan Designation: Residential and Flood Plain

The Flood Plain designation applies to approximately 400 square metres at the north east corner of the property. The balance of the Land is Residential.

Zoning By-law: Institutional (I) and Flood Plain [FP(RD)] with a Regulated Area (UTRCA) overlay.

The Flood Plain zone applies to approximately 400 square metres at the north east corner of the property. The balance of the Land is Residential.

Approximately 30 percent of the lot (generally east side) is subject to the permitting requirements of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.

Source water Protection: Approximately 315 square metres at the southeast corner of the property is considered vulnerable (score 10).

Almost all residential development will be permitted within this area. Commercial and industrial uses may have operational impacts.

Servicing: Municipal water, sewer, fibre is installed in the building from Festival Hydro/Rhizome Networks

b) Is the Land Surplus to the Town's Needs?

This question is one of the key questions for the Strategic Priorities Committee. Several options are presented for consideration:

Retention Options:

i) **Retain the Property for a Cultural Use:** At the May 24, 2016 meeting Council received correspondence from Ms. Chantal Lynch encouraging Council to consider redeveloping 121 Ontario Street into a Creative Arts Centre. For the Committee's reference, this correspondence is included as Attachment 3 of this report. Council considered this request and passed the following resolution:

2016-05-24-09

THAT the Correspondence from Chantal Lynch be referred to staff for inclusion in the forthcoming report regarding future options for 121 Ontario Street.

Redeveloping 121 Ontario Street into a creative arts or cultural center could take several forms. For example, the building could be renovated to be a space with several rooms available for use and rent by artisans following a similar model to what is occurring at the Town's train station. Another option would be for the building to be renovated into a public space where the Town organized art showings, creative workshops, etc.

Developing a creative arts or cultural center in St. Mary is not a new discussion. There has been cursory discussion by community members and Town staff in the past, most recently in 2011, about establishing an arts and culture centre in the downtown core. Possible locations within the core were discussed, but no formal recommendations or decisions were made about establishing a centre or where it should be located.

The 2011 Cultural Mapping Project and the 2013 Municipal Cultural Plan demonstrates that St. Marys has a diverse and vibrant cultural scene. The recent St. Marys Strategic Plan Revision further supports and recognizes the importance of arts and culture in St. Marys. Both the Municipal Cultural Plan and the Revised Strategic Plan recommend focusing on supporting and developing these initiatives in the downtown core. While 121 Ontario Street may have the space and layout for an arts and cultural centre, it is located outside the downtown core and contradicts the recommendations to foster arts and cultural within the core. If Council were to decide to establish a creative arts or cultural centre Council will need to decide if they wish to follow the recommendations within the Revised Strategic Plan which are to focus the Town's efforts on arts and culture to the core.

At this time, neither staff nor Council has undertaken any discussions regarding an arts and culture centre, its organizational structure, funding model or location. While the building at 121 Ontario St. South may be a possible location for an arts and culture centre, Council will first need to decide the Town's role in establishing a centre. The disadvantage of the Town taking the lead in this proposed initiative is that it will require further capital spending by the Town. This is a challenge considering that the Town has yet to decide how it will fund the Early Learning Centre relocation. A second challenge to consider is that if the Town retains the property, there will be no sales revenue available to fund the Town's portion of the Early Learning Centre relocation and an alternative funding strategy will have to be developed.

If Council were to choose this option there are no planning implications. If a significant renovation were to take place a Heritage Assessment would likely be needed.

ii) **Retain the Property for a Possible Housing Project:** Within the revised strategic plan Council is proposing to make a commitment to diversify the Town's housing stock so that there are options that are affordable, attainable, and include more rentals. Within the draft "Housing Pillar" there are several tactics that are outlined:

- Seeking public-private partnerships to launch a renewed housing strategy which is designed to meet the current attainability challenges, and which may require a different form of initial investment; and
- Prioritizing Town-owned assets and lands, deciding which are essential and non-essential, and deciding if there are options to lease, sell, or partner.

A possible option for 121 Ontario Street is for the Town to retain the property and to partner with a third-party to develop a housing project. In the summer of 2016 the City of Stratford announced new funding for housing projects that are geared to income. During the research of this report staff met with representatives of St. Marys Community Living who have expressed an interest in partnering with the Town on a project of this nature.

Town staff has also had a preliminary meeting with City staff to review the terms and conditions of the funding program. We have learned that the funding will become available in 2018 and the City will be releasing an RFP in 2017 for submissions of potential projects. Some of the key criteria that the City will be looking for are multi-residential projects, projects with creative collaborations, and projects with municipal backing.

A partnership between the Town and Community Living would be viewed as a very strong submission in the RFP process. However, there are two key points to consider. First, because this project would have to be submitted in an RFP process there is no guarantee that the project would be selected to proceed. As a result, in 2018 the Town could be in the same situation that it is today trying to decide what it will do with this property. Secondly, in this partnership the Town would need to gift the land to St. Marys Community Living for the project to proceed. As a result, the Town would forego any sales revenue available to fund the Town's portion of the Early Learning Centre relocation and an alternative funding strategy will have to be developed.

If Council is interested in pursuing this option the City has asked to be notified. City staff sees potential in this partnership and would like to proceed with a feasibility study of the site to further determine the viability of the project.

If Council were to choose this option there are planning implications. A Zoning By-law Amendment, a Site Plan Agreement, and a Record of Site Condition would be required. A Heritage Assessment would also be likely.

Sales Options:

i) **Sell the Entire Property for a Residential Use:** As above, in the draft strategic plan Council has identified a need for a flexible housing stock in St. Marys that include "attainable options". The Town could sell the property in its entirety and include various stipulations in the sales agreement, including, but not limited to:

- That the existing building be retained;
- That rentals units be developed;
- That a certain price point be achieved;
- That the green space be retained;
- That the green space may be used for further residential use (subject to some or no conditions).

Because the Town owns the property, it has the flexibility to include as many or as few conditions as it sees fit. The caveat is that with an increasing list of conditions, it is reasonable to expect the demand for the property to narrow which ultimately could have the effect of depressing the sale price of the lands.

For a residential use the following planning steps would be required: A Zoning By-law Amendment, a Site Plan Agreement, and a Record of Site Condition would be required. A Heritage Assessment would also be likely.

ii) **Sell the Entire Property for a Commercial or Institutional Use:** An option to consider is to allow the open sale of the property so that any interested commercial or institutional purchaser could bid on the property. There is likely to be some interest in the property on the open market because the site is already complete with a parking area and is well served with utilities (water, sewer, and fibre optic).

The primary disadvantage of this option is that it is not consistent with the Town's guiding statements in the Official Plan. The Official Plan establishes the Core Commercial District and guides the Town to focus on commercial development within the district. Selling the property to promote a new commercial or institutional use outside of the Core Commercial District would not be in keeping with these guiding statements in the official plan.

If Council were to choose this option there are planning implications. An Official Plan Amendment, zoning By-law Amendment, Site Plan Agreement, Source Water Protection Screening, and a Land Use Compatibility Study would be required. A Heritage Assessment would also be likely.

- iii) **Divide the Property and Sell as Two Separate Parcels:** An option to consider is to divide the property into two separate parcels, and allow the sale of each parcel separately. In this option, it is envisioned that one parcel would be established around the existing building, and the second parcel would be established in the green space.

In this option there are several sub-options which consist of selling both parcels for residential use, selling one for residential and one for commercial/institutional, or selling both parcels for commercial/institutional. As described above, there are a number of considerations whether the property(ies) is / are sold as residential or commercial/institutional.

In all instances the options to sell the property have the advantage of producing a sales revenue to offset the cost of relocating the Early Learning Centre. The primary disadvantage is that the Town would lose direct control of the property which could partially or fully impact the Town's ability to influence a future owner to retain the historic building on the site.

Blended Option: Retain a Portion of the Property and Sell a portion of the Property

A further option to consider is for the Town to divide the existing property into two parcels and to retain a portion and to sell a portion. This option could be considered if Council believes that there is a desirable future use of the building, and that the best chance of that future use occurring is if the municipality owns the building.

For instance, if the Town wished to develop a cultural space, or to partner with Community Living on a housing project, the building could be retained for the proposed use and the surplus green space sold. This option has the advantage of the Town retaining the building which results in more direct control on the building's future. This option also has the benefit of generating some revenue to offset the costs of relocating the Early Learning Centre, albeit a reduce amount.

c) Appraisal

As a part of the land sale process, by-law 03-2012 requires that an appraisal of the property be completed. An appraisal of the property has been completed by Otto and Company and is presented in closed session so that Council has information regarding the projected market value of the property. This information is presented in closed session so that the value of the land is not disclosed in the event that Council decides to sell the land through an open bidding process.

d) Public Notice Approach

e) Method of Sale

f) Terms and Conditions

As a part of the land sale process by-law 03-2012 requires that the planned public notice approach, the method of sale, and the proposed conditions of sale be reviewed and discussed by Council. It is staff's suggestion that it is premature to have this discussion prior to Council making a final decision whether or not part or all of the property is to be sold. Once that decision is made a further report will come forward to facilitate this discussion.

g) Determination of Marketability of the Land

The final pre-sale task required in by-law 03-2012 is to determine if the land is considered to have full or limited marketability. The by-law provides the following definitions:

"Full Marketability" means land which would, in the opinion of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate, be of interest to potential purchasers in the open market due to size, shape, location, topography, environmental condition, permitted land uses, or any other factor which the Chief Administrative Officer or designate, considers relevant.

"Limited Marketability" means land which would, in the opinion of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate, be of limited interest to potential purchasers due to size, shape, location,

topography, environmental condition, land use restrictions, or any other factor which the Chief Administrative Officer, or designate, considers relevant.

In this instance, the land is most likely to be fully marketable, with interest on the open market.

SUMMARY: Discussion 1 (Future Uses and Potential Sale of 121 Ontario Street)

From this first discussion item staff recommends that the Committee should make recommendations to Council to answer the following questions:

- Is 121 Ontario Street considered to be surplus to the municipal need, in whole or in part?
- If no, what portion of the property does the Committee recommend to Council to be retained?
- If any portion of the property is to be retained, what is the desired use that the Committee recommends Council pursue?

At first glance, it was staffs thought that the preferable solution for the property was to divide it into two parcels and sell at least one if not both of the parcels. However, the Town's Planner has recommend that if Council envisions some form of residential development taking place at the property the parcel should not be divided. The Planner has suggested that the highest and best use for this parcel would be a higher density multi-residential use that would take advantage of its proximity to the Core. The three roads provide access opportunities and buffering for the existing residential areas and such development is to be directed along arterial and collector roads (Thomas Street is a collector road). Water, sanitary, storm and other services are available for the site.

The division of the land into parcel will reduce building envelopes and flexibility in building design, and would generally result in a lower yield of residential units as independent open spaces and parking facilities will need to be provided.

A low-rise apartment building built into the hill (there is about a 6 metres change in elevation) will allow for views of the river and walkout units while minimizing the impact of the neighbour and taking advantage of the sites natural features.

Generating the sales revenue for this property is important to offset the capital costs of the Early Learning Centre relocation, and using these funds to pay for the move is preferable to depleting reserves or borrowing.

Discussion 2: Recommendation for a Heritage Designation of 121 Ontario Street

The St. Marys Heritage Committee is aware that the oldest school building in St. Marys, the pre-Confederation limestone West Ward School, is facing a change. Beginning in December, 2015 and throughout the 2016 meetings of the Heritage Committee the topic of the West Ward School, and its possible vacancy, was discussed.

The Heritage Committee believes that considering its age (a pre-Confederation building), its almost continuous use for 150 years as a facility for the instruction of children of various ages, its landmark status in the community, its surviving architectural features showing local limestone masonry and its association with generations of local teachers and pupils, West Ward School is a property very worthy of heritage designation.

The St. Marys Heritage Committee believes that the West Ward School at 121 Ontario Street South is a building with significant cultural heritage value and very worthy of heritage designation. At the March 12, 2016 Heritage Committee meeting the following motion was made:

Moved by Paul King, seconded by Sherri Gropp that the St. Marys Heritage Committee recommends the property locally known as West Ward School, currently the St. Marys Early Learning Centre, at 121 Ontario Street South, St. Marys be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Carried.

Attachment 4 to this report is the draft statement of designation for the property.

It is the *Ontario Heritage Act* which provides municipalities with the authority to designate and conserve Ontario's property. A heritage designation recognizes the importance of a property to the local community; protects the property's cultural heritage value; encourages good stewardship and conservation; and promotes knowledge and understanding about the property.

Designation not only publicly recognizes and promotes awareness of heritage properties, it also provides a process for ensuring that changes to a heritage property are appropriately managed and that these changes respect the property's heritage value. This includes protection from demolition. Designation does not prevent alternative uses of the building or changes / alterations to the building, it means that there is a process and discussion about what those changes may be and how they impact the cultural value of the building. It is important to understand that a heritage designation of a property is not permanent. The Ontario Heritage Act provides for designations to be amended by Council if so required, and repealed if desired.

So Council is aware, when designated it is the property that receives the designation. When considering the recommendation to designate 121 Ontario Street in tandem with the previous discussion regarding selling or retaining the property, the question becomes is it the property as a whole that is significant or the building itself?

Also important to consider is: what are the positive and perceived negatives of a heritage designation of 121 Ontario Street in relation to some of the possible options outlined for its future?

Pros

- Designation does not prevent redevelopment / reuse of the building, it means a conversation needs to take place on what the redevelopment / reuse looks like. Designation does not prevent the school from being converted to a business, residence or public space.
- Designation is a means to preserve the character and architecture elements of the building. At this point in time, staff believes the designation would address the exterior of the building; there has been no mention of any interior elements.
- Would reinforce that preserving Town heritage and redevelopment / progress can go hand in hand. Both should, and can, work hand in hand.

Cons

- There is a perception that a designation means you cannot do anything to the building. As above, this is not the case, but recent events with the Andrews building have reinforced this perception locally despite clear examples of other buildings within the Heritage Conservation District being modified.
- Because of perception, a heritage designation of the property may cause private individuals to hesitate in their consideration to acquire and redevelop the site. Again, this is not the case, and most plans can be implemented through dialogue with the Town.
- Because some view heritage designation as a limitation on a property, will this perception affect the sales price for the property by limiting the market? This likely is a local perception because research within the province shows that heritage buildings do normally command their asking price.

SUMMARY: Discussion 2 (Recommendation for a Heritage Designation of 121 Ontario Street)

From this first discussion item staff recommends that the Committee should make a recommendation to Council to answer the following question:

- Does the Committee recommend to Council that 121 Ontario Street should be heritage designated?

The timing of considering the recommendation to designate is tricky because, depending on the preferred future use for the property, the Town may not be the property owner in the very near future. In fairness to the Heritage St. Marys Committee, prior to November of 2015 there was likely a reasonable assumption made by the committee members that the Town would continue to own the property and the historic building would thus be retained and preserved. Now that the Town is considering disposing of the property, there is the potential that the Town loses

direct control over the fate of the site and there is a risk that a future property owner could remove the building. The Heritage Committee has identified the property as historically significant and deserving of preservation, and has recommended that the Town (through designation) should retain some control of the site to mitigate this risk.

When designating a property, it is preferable and encouraged to have a dialogue with the owner of the property and to have them be supportive of the designation. In the 121 Ontario Street situation, if the property is to be sold there is no way to know if the immediately following owner will be supportive of designation. Neither is there a way to accurately predict what, if any, impact a heritage designation could have on the sale of the property in the local market.

It is staff's recommendation that the decision on the future use of the property should be made first, and then the decision on the recommendation heritage designation should be made. Some options to consider with respect to the recommended designation if the Town decides to sell or retain all or a part of the property:

1. Deny the recommendation to designate 121 Ontario Street.
2. Support the recommendation to designate 121 Ontario Street.
3. If the decision is that any current or future property parcel which includes the building be disposed, there is no way to accurately predict what effect, if any, a designation could have on the sale process or if a future owner would be supportive of a designation. If there is interest by Council in protecting the building, a sale process could be designed to give preference to purchasers who have a future use for the building. The current recommendation to designate the building could be taken under advisement for now, explained to prospective purchasers throughout the sale process, and discussed with the future owner with a final decision on the designation being made once the sale process has concluded but before the formal land transfer occurs.
4. If the decision is that the Town retains any current or future parcel which includes the building, staff recommends that the Committee supports designation. The designation could be on the property immediately surrounding the school (which would encompass the building), while the lands immediately to the south would not be designated if they were to be divided off and sold.

SUMMARY

This purpose of this report has been to present information for the Strategic Priorities Committee to review and discuss regarding the future uses or potential sale of the 121 Ontario Street property and the recommendation to designate the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

To move this file forward, the staff requires the Committee to consider the following questions regarding the future use and heritage designation of the property.

- Is 121 Ontario Street considered to be surplus to the municipal need, in whole or in part?
- If no, what portion of the property does the Committee recommend to Council to be retained?
- If any portion of the property is to be retained, what is the desired use that the Committee recommends Council pursue?
- Does the Committee recommend to Council that 121 Ontario Street should be heritage designated?

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this time.

Still outstanding is a funding plan for the Town's capital costs for the Early Learning Centre relocation which are forecasted to be in the order of \$500,000. The development of such a funding plan is contingent on the Town making a decision regarding the sale or retention of the 121 Ontario Street property as any sales revenue for the property would need to be factored into the funding plan. Once Council's preferred option for 121 Ontario Street is determined, staff will return with a recommended funding plan for the Early Learning Centre relocation.

OTHERS CONSULTED

Senior Management Team

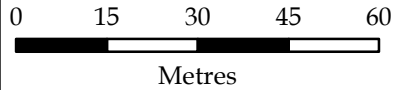
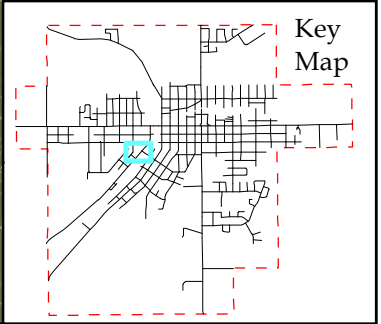
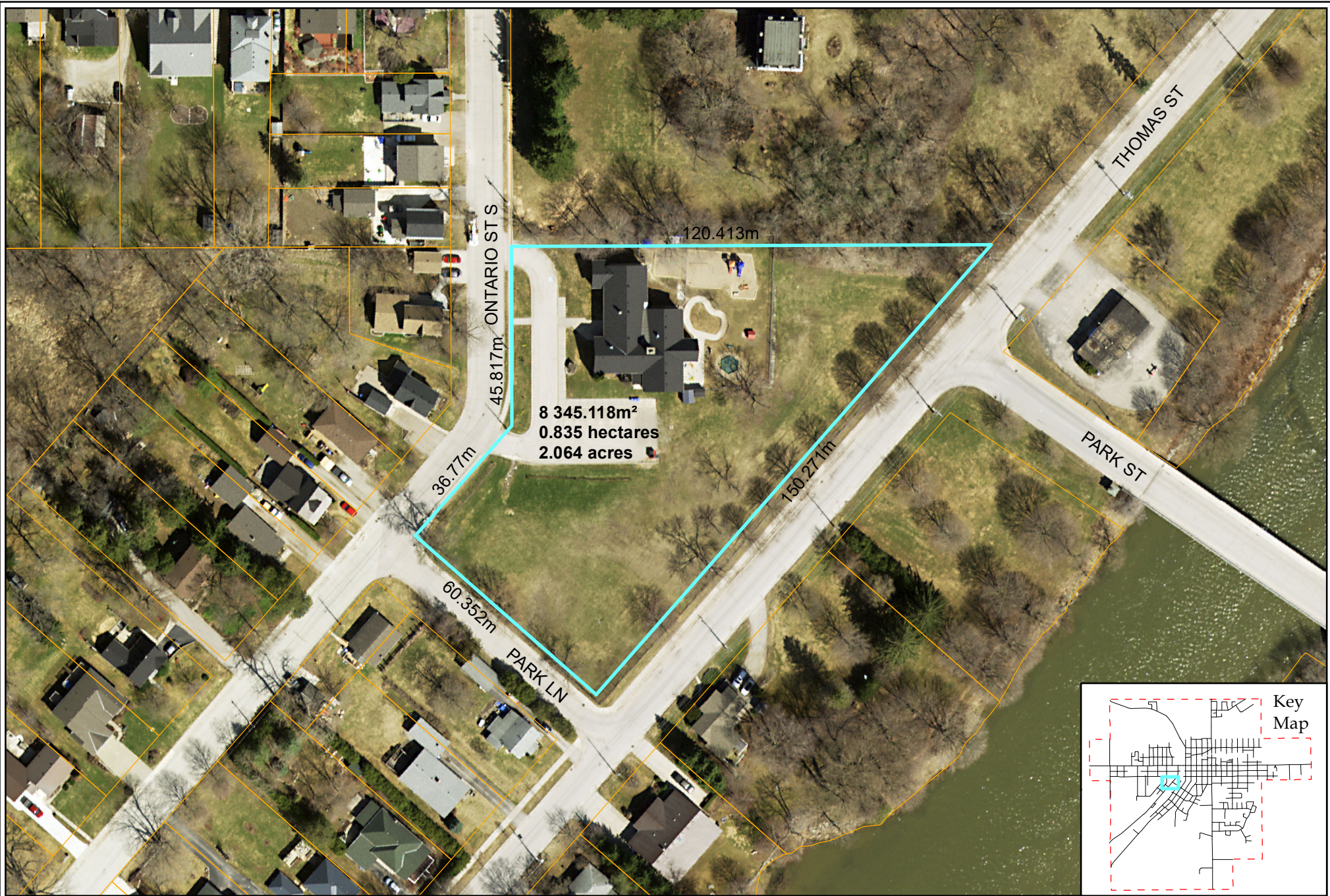
ATTACHMENTS

1. Aerial Map – 121 Ontario Street
2. Zoning Map – 121 Ontario Street
3. Letter from Ms. Chantal Lynch
4. Statements of Cultural Heritage Significance – 121 Ontario Street

Respectfully submitted,



Brent Kittmer, CAO / Clerk



Town of St. Marys

121 Ontario Street South
22/07/16

Legend

- Lots
- Property For Sale

Servicing

- <waterline size>
- <sanitary size>
- <gas size>



THIS IS **KEY MAP 12** OF SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW
NO. OF THE TOWN OF ST. MARYS

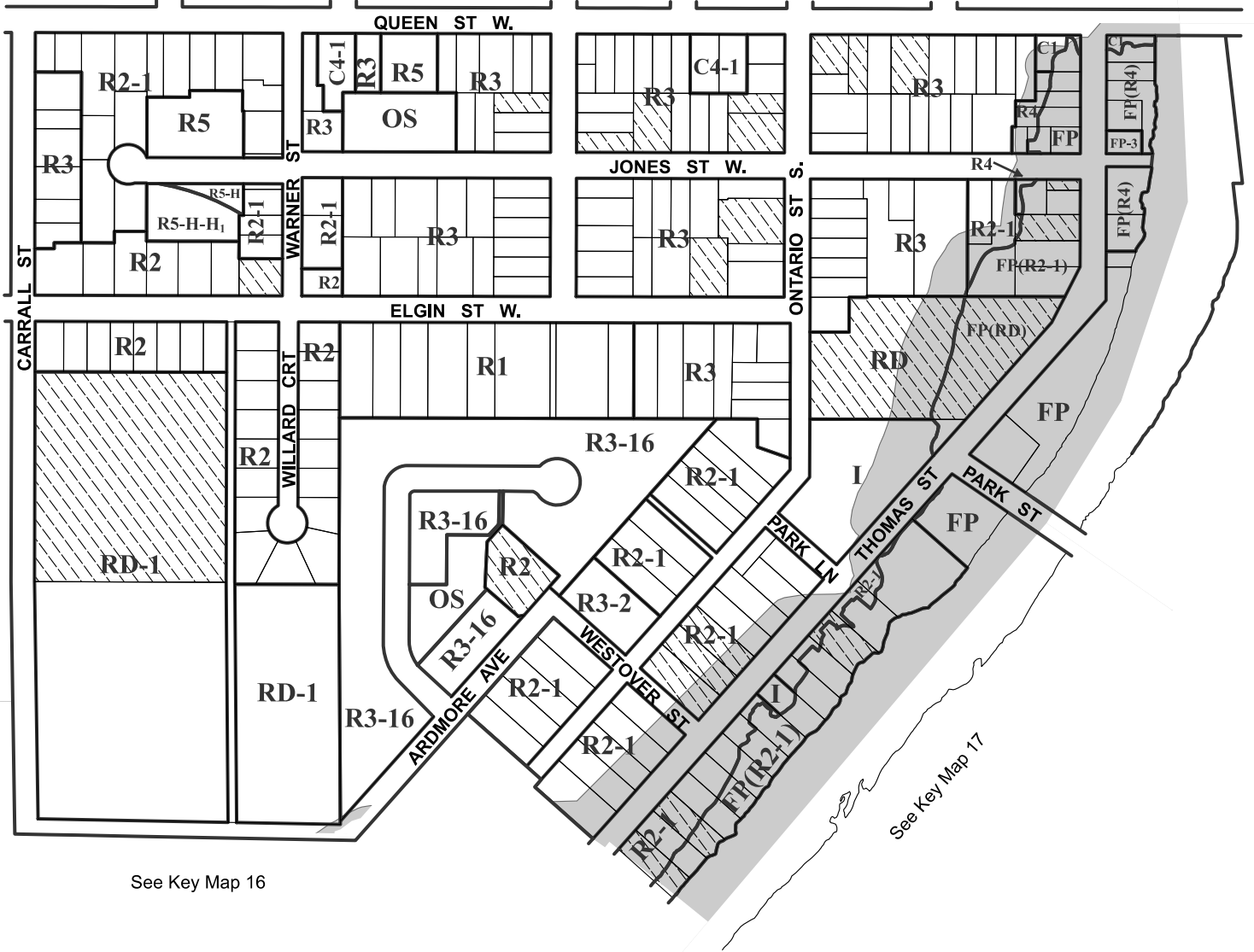
AMENDED BY
BY-LAW NO.
104-2013

See Key Map 5

See Key Map 6

See Key Map 11





See Key Map 13



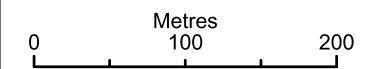
See Key Map 16

See Key Map 17



-  Parcels
-  Zoning By-law Boundaries
-  Heritage Classified
-  UTRCA Regulation Limit

Last Amended:
Absolute Scale 1:5 000



Creative Arts Centre. FoFrom: Chantal Lynch [mailto:chantalynch@gmail.com]

Sent: May 2, 2016 10:44 AM

To: Al Strathdee <astrathdee@town.stmarys.on.ca>; Lynn Hainer <lhainer@town.stmarys.on.ca>; Carey Pope <CPope@town.stmarys.on.ca>; Don Van Galen <dvangalen@town.stmarys.on.ca>; Bill Osborne <bosborne@town.stmarys.on.ca>; Jim Craigmile <jcraigmile@town.stmarys.on.ca>; Tony Winter <TWinter@town.stmarys.on.ca>

Cc: Trisha McKibbin <tmckibbin@town.stmarys.on.ca>; Brent Kittmer <bkittmer@town.stmarys.on.ca>

Subject: St Marys Creative Arts Centre

Hello and I hope this email finds you all well.

With the moving of the daycare I would like to propose that the Town consider funding a feasibility study on the viability of a Creative Arts Centre in the West Ward School.

The Town of St Marys Municipal Cultural Plan suggests that St Marys capitalize on our heritage assets as stages for cultural happenings. Utilizing the building to support cultural programming and artistic initiatives is a natural fit and I believe a need in the community. Cultural activities are also very important to those looking to retire in or relocate from bigger urban areas.

Shared space, shared tools. In Hamilton at the Public Library you can use 3D printers, photo studio equipment, etc. Amazing!

Stratford has 'The Festival', and we could take advantage of the thousands of cultural tourists they draw to explore our built culture and be mini hub for the Creative Arts, painting, writing, textile arts, pottery, woodworking, photography, sculpture and so on. We may not want to turn St Marys into Bayfield but workshops of 30 or so from out of town staying, eating and playing do bring economic benefits.

In time and If there is enough interest the Creative Arts Centre may open a shop on Queen Street offering local artisan products.

Hamilton Public Library: <http://www.hpl.ca/articles/digital-media-labs>

Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre: <http://creativeartscentre.com/>

Grande Prairie, Alberta: <http://creativecentre.ca/>

Victoria, British Columbia: <http://www.makerspace.ca/cpages/home>

Creative City Network: <http://www.creativecity.ca/>

Most importantly, funding may be available:

<http://canadacouncil.ca/council/grants>

<http://www.arts.on.ca/site4.aspx>

Town of St Marys

St Marys BIA

Perth County

etc.

In closing, please consider this as an option. I do believe our community will embrace the idea.

Sincerely,

Chantal Lynch
Box 2748
146 Queen Street East
St Marys, On N4X 1A5

West Ward School

(St. Marys Early Learning Centre)

121 Ontario Street South, St. Marys, Ontario

Statements of Cultural Heritage Significance

January 2016



Introduction:

The 1865 stone building overlooking the Thames River from its hilltop setting in the west ward is the oldest remaining school within the municipality. Old school buildings usually show evidence of more modifications than many other important early structures. Changes have been imposed on them by factors such as enrollment numbers, school trustees' leadership initiatives and levels of municipal support through tax levies. Upgrades have been strongly recommended by inspectors or mandated by the government departments/ministries.

The West Ward School is no exception. Today's Early Learning Centre is different, both inside and out, from the original two-room building. But, when seen from the base of the hill on Thomas Street, it is immediately recognizable as the familiar old school that has long been part of the community.



East façade, January 2016

Design value or physical value (Architectural value)

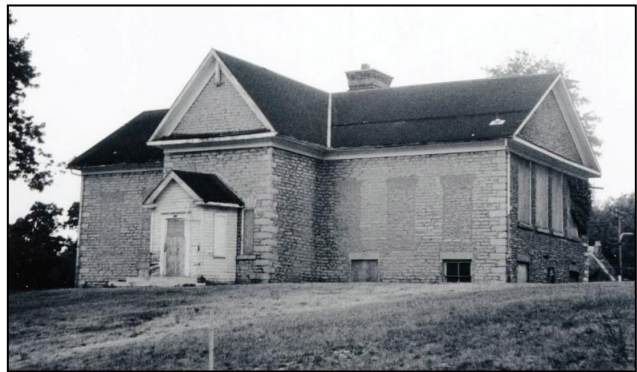
The property is an excellent example of a mid-19th century school building, not ornate but intended to present a practical, useful appearance. Even so, the designer, Robert Barbour, and his stonemasons and other craftsmen included many features that enhanced the building. Some have been lost, such as almost all the original windows with their monolithic sills and segmented lintels. The two small windows that flank the front entrance retain these features. Also surviving is the segmented arch over the south entrance and the arched window set above the recessed door of the entry.

The two original rooms to the north and to the south are still easily discernible from the exterior and the protruding east-west gable that divides them remains in place centred over both the east and west façades. These gables give the entire building a Greek Revival appearance. St. Marys limestone was used for the exterior, set in mortar made from Guelph lime in 1865. (By the time of the 1874 addition and for subsequent re-pointing, locally-produced mortar – famous for its high quality – was probably used.) The stone was laid in regular courses with larger, smooth-finished blocks used as quoins.

The space provided in 1865 by the original two-room school soon was insufficient and overcrowding became an issue again. In 1874, a third classroom was added to the west, making the building L-shaped. The windows and stone work were carefully matched to the original building.

Through the years, while it was still a public school, attempts were made to conform to changing educational standards. This was challenging because West Ward School was not considered an ideal place for instruction. While many students loved the hilltop site, one inspector called it bleak and windswept with no level area on the grounds for a proper playing field. Various wooden structures, sometimes quite ramshackle, were placed in front of the east entrance to keep out drafts as the children entered and left the school.

In days when there was no practical way to provide artificial light to a classroom, the fact that the West Ward classrooms had windows on three sides seemed at first to be an advantage. However, a later theory was that cross-lighting was not conducive to learning. During World



War I, William Stafford was hired to close in the east-facing windows that gave such a wonderful view of the town and the Thames River. Other changes such as the excavation of the basement for toilets and a furnace were both practical and inevitable.

When the Town of St. Marys acquired the school property from the Perth County Board of Education in the late 1970s with the intention of retrofitting it as a Day Nursery and Community Centre, the building had been vacant for some years and needed a great deal of work. Architect Norbert Schuller planned the renovations and, while working within budget limitations, designed an addition to be sensitive to the historic building.

The interior was upgraded although the original floor plan of the three classrooms remained. The exterior windows were greatly modified. The old paired, double-hung windows were replaced by

windows with larger panes of glass, set higher on the exterior walls. They did, however, approximate the original window placement and the east-facing windows came back into existence.



The greatest change was a large addition at the northwest corner, wood-frame construction with board and batten siding. It was stained grey to be as harmonious as possible with the original stone portion. This addition has since been covered with aluminum siding.

The addition was necessary to provide assembly space where the children from all three rooms could gather for common programming. In the evenings and on weekends, it was meeting space for such activities as St. Marys Minor Ball executive meetings, baton practice and Girl Guides.

To meet licensing requirements for operating a Day Care/Nursery School, a kitchen and washrooms on the main floor were installed. The new main entrance from Ontario Street was wheelchair accessible.

Throughout the years, other modifications have been made to meet the legislated requirements for licensing. Playground equipment, perimeter fencing and a small addition in the extreme northwest corner in 2007 are ones that are particularly noticeable from the exterior of the building.



West façade, January 2016

Historic value or associative value:

The West Ward School and the changes it has undergone through the years yield considerable information about the Town of St. Marys and its support for education for the community's children. Although the town was small, education was an early priority. Many school board members were exceptional advocates for public schooling and constantly lobbied for improvements to the buildings, the classroom facilities and the teaching staff. They were not always successful – for example, reaching agreement to build a new Central School in 1914 took at least a decade longer than the board had hoped. But they and Town Council always made sure that there were classrooms for the children and teachers to staff them. West Ward School stands as the best remaining example of the school board and town council's response to the needs and wishes of St. Marys ratepayers.

When it became town property in the 1970s, it showed again the Town of St. Marys' ability to adapt to changing needs of its citizens. There were now more families with both parents working and therefore more need for Day Care. By deciding to make the old school a Day Care/Nursery School, the Town showed that it was responsive to this need.

The loyalty and esprit de corps felt by teachers and students who were part of West Ward School was an important factor in the educational experience of many students who were within its catchment area. West Ward never had an electric school bell system but used a traditional school bell that was rung by hand in the schoolyard, signaling the end of recess. It was a privilege to ring that bell – sought after as a reward by all the students. (The bell is now part of the collection of the St. Marys Museum.) Details such as the bell and the need to adapt games to the hillside location helped build a strong sense of the school's individuality. The West Warders remained an identifiable group even when they joined Central students for their final years of elementary education.

Many prominent St. Marys citizens have been associated with West Ward School through the years beginning with its construction according to plans that had probably been drawn by builder/designer Robert Barbour who was appointed Inspector of Work for the project. He reported to the Public School Board where he also served for many years, holding various executive offices. Masonry was completed by the partnership of Knox and Clyde while Robert Davey was responsible for the plastering. All of these tradesmen made important contributions to public and private buildings in St. Marys during their careers.

There were some remarkable teachers at the school. In 1865, the first teachers in the two original rooms were Miss Elizabeth Cruttenden and Miss Kate Junor, both members of families of some of the town's earliest settlers. Robert Barbour, who conveniently lived just a block away, had in his large family, five daughters, all of whom taught in the public school system at some point in their lives, frequently at West Ward School. Miss Margaret Barbour and Mrs. Robina Barbour Atkinson were the two who taught the longest.



Robert Barbour and some of his family

Lillian McIntosh (later Mrs. Ullyott) was hired in the 1930s and continued teaching for more than four decades, even while managing a family: her husband, two sons and a daughter. Mrs. Nina Fotheringham and Mrs. Ina Harlton are also well remembered. These three were the last public school teachers in the building.

The school was in a good position to become a Day Care facility in 1979, thanks to an excellent start to this type of pre-school programming begun in the St. Marys United Church by Helen Crosby, Roberta Teahen and Helen Wemp. The school's rehabilitation for this use was due to the foresight of members of Town Council at that time who supported an application for funding to Wintario and who authorized the activities of a community fundraising group. Early Day Care advocates included Ella Cox, Marti Cox (Lindsay), Ted Rowcliffe, Shirley (Rowcliffe) Near, Jerry Rozek, Gerry and Jill Haliburton and Patricia Healy.

The plans of Norbert Schuller, a well-known area architect who had worked on other projects for the town, have already been described.



A clipping from the St. Marys Journal Argus, 1980, showing the ribbon cutting for the St. Marys Day Nursery and Arts Centre. As well as Mayor Clifton Brown, MPP Hugh Edighoffer and representatives from the Ministries of Social Services and Culture and Recreation are present.

NOTE: The facility's joint use as declared in the original grant applications and fundraising drive continued for about a decade but, as government requirements for early childhood education became more stringent, the community arts/activity centre component was phased out, the organizations finding other venues for meetings and activities.

Contextual value:

The criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest according to *Ontario Regulation 9/06* also include contextual value along with design and historic/associative value. A property has this value if it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area; is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings; is a landmark.

The West Ward School, perched on its hilltop for more than a century and a half is all of these things. The toboggan tracks down the hillside just as soon as the first snow settles are symbolic of what it means as a familiar and important place for the neighbourhood and for the Town of St. Marys.



Teachers and students in front of West Ward School, ca 1890.

Prepared by Heritage St. Marys
January 2016



FORMAL REPORT

To: Chair Strathee and Members of Strategic Priorities Committee

From: Trisha McKibbin, Director of Corporate Services / Deputy Clerk

Date of Meeting: 18 October 2016

Subject: **COR 23-2016 Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program, Façade Improvement Program and Heritage Grant Program**

PURPOSE

To present information to Council in follow up to the September 20, 2016 Strategic Priorities meeting regarding the specific criteria for a Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program, and the potential funding implications of realigning the Façade Improvement Grant and the Designated Heritage Property Grant programs.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COR 23-2016 Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program, Façade Improvement Program and Heritage Grant Program be received for discussion.

BACKGROUND

At the September 20, 2016 Strategic Priorities meeting, the Committee moved that staff be directed to amend the existing grant programs to limit the maximum grant to 50% or project cost, under all eligible programs. Staff was also directed to report back on how much additional funding would be made available if the existing grant programs (Façade Improvement and Heritage Grant) were amended to a total combined maximum amount of 50% of total project costs.

The SP Committee also requested staff report back on a heritage tax rebate program, specifically with options for a tiered program that contains both flexible and rigid program requirements. The committee also requested further information on how a program could be designed as an incentive to property owners to update downtown residential spaces. A detailed cost analysis of program options and the cost impact to the Town was another topic that the Committee wished to explore in further detail.

REPORT

Façade and Heritage Property Grant Capping

The chart below provides a review of the 2015 and 2016 funds awarded under both the Façade Improvement and Designated Heritage Property grants. The far right column provides a calculation on what funding would have been available if the 50% cap was in place. In 2015 there would have been **\$9,316** in additional funding available and **\$5,626** in 2016.

2016 Awarded Grants					
Address	Applicants Share	Façade Grant	Heritage Grant	Project Total	Savings if maximum %50 contribution in place
19-21 Water St. S	\$1,916	\$2,876	\$4,793	\$9,585	\$7,669 (funding combined) -4,792.50 (50% of project total) = \$2,876
28 Church St. S	\$114	\$461	\$960	\$1,535	\$1,421 -767.50 = \$653.50
139 Queen St. E	\$1,396	\$2,096	\$3,493	\$6,985	\$5,589 -\$3,492.50 = \$2,096.50
155 Queen St. E	\$25,342	\$3,000	\$10,000	\$38,342	\$13,000 -\$13,000 is maximum funding available under conditions of the grants = funding less than %50
154 Queen St. E	\$13,006	0	\$7500	\$20,506	Funding less than 50%
TOTALS	41,774	\$8,433	\$26,746	\$76,953	\$5,626
2015 Awarded Grants					
Address	Applicants Share	Façade Grant	Heritage Grant	Project Total	Saving if maximum %50 contribution in place
28 Church St. S	\$2,676	\$3,000	\$5,678	\$11,354	\$8,678 -\$5,677 = \$3,001
109-113 Queen St E	\$1,980	\$2,970	\$4,950	\$9,900	\$7,920 -\$4,950 = \$2,970
145 Queen St. E	\$8,700	\$3,000	\$8,200	\$19,900	\$11,200 -\$9,950 = \$1,250
158 Queen St. E	\$5,416	\$3,000	\$6,066	\$14,482	\$9,066 -\$7,241 = \$1,825
159 Queen St. E	\$180	\$270	\$450	\$900	\$720 -\$450 = \$270
144-146 Queen St. E	\$1,700	\$0	\$1,700	\$3,400	Funded at %50
TOTAL	\$23,152	\$12,240	\$27,044	\$59,936	\$9,316

Heritage Tax Rebate Program Design

Presented below are proposed criteria for a tiered Heritage Property Tax Rebate program.

Program A is a more streamlined program that contains the legislative criteria required by the Province, as well as a minimum municipal requirements.

Program Option A – Flexible Program

1. Eligible for a 20% rebate under this program
2. Rebate applicable to the commercial taxes on the property
3. Property is designated under Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and located within the Heritage Conservation District
4. A Heritage Conservation Agreement must be signed between the municipality and the applicant
5. An application must be submitted no later than January 31 in the year following the first year for which the Owner is seeking to obtain the Heritage Property Tax Rebate
6. The building on the property must be occupied 10 months of the year to be eligible
7. For a property to be eligible under this program it is required that there are no unpaid taxes, local improvement charges, fees, or other monies owed to the Town
 - a. The property is ineligible if the property owner is receiving vacant building tax relief or Charity Rebate from the Town

Program Option B – Rigid Program

Program B contains a more rigid program that contains the legislative criteria required by the Province, as well as additional municipal requirements.

1. Eligible for a 40% rebate under this program
2. Rebate applicable to both the commercial and residential taxes.
 - a. Applicable to Residential taxes if the property has undergone significant renovation and/or significant rehabilitation that created more, or significantly improved existing, residential dwelling units on one or more upper floors of the eligible property
3. Property is designated under Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and located within the Heritage Conservation District
4. A Heritage Conservation Agreement must be signed between the municipality and the applicant
5. An application must be submitted no later than January 28 in the year following the first year for which the Owner is seeking to obtain the Heritage Property Tax Rebate
 - a. Submission of all receipts and expense reports for work on the property must accompany the application form
 - b. Before and After photographs must accompany the application form
 - c. Copy of Insurance must accompany the application form
6. Building on property must be occupied 10 months of the year to be eligible

7. For a property to be eligible under this program it is required that there are no unpaid taxes, local improvement charges, fees, or other monies owed to the Town
 - a. The property is ineligible if the property owner is receiving vacant building tax relief or Charity Rebate from the Town
8. The satisfactory completion of any and all inspections of the Eligible Property by the appropriate Town staff

The two programs designs above present the basis components of a tiered granting program. There are a number of other program components requiring direction before staff can begin the drafting of a by-law:

1. Does Council wish to set a limit on the number of years a property can be eligible for tax relief (i.e., can apply every three years, or only eligible for five years, etc.), or is it Council's preference that the tax rebate program be available to all properties every year?

Recommendation - It is staff's recommendation that the program be available to eligible properties once every two years. This restriction will have the benefit of allowing more properties to access the funds for this rebate program.

2. Does Council wish to set a cap on the total amount of dollars a property can receive under the tax rebate program? Many programs set a cap to ensure that the funding available is distributed amongst a range of properties, and not solely used by the properties eligible for the greatest amount of tax relief/rebate. Without a cap, those properties that pay the highest property taxes could consume the entire program budget.

Recommendation - It is staff's recommendation that the program include a program cap of \$2,500. This means that any property that pays over \$12,500 in property taxes will only receive \$2,500 rather than a full 20% or 40% rebate. The purpose of a cap is to spread the limited funds budgeted for this program to as many properties as possible each year.

3. Does Council wish to set a minimum threshold of tax rebate? Some programs establish this as an eligibility criteria so that owners who pay a nominal amount of property taxes would not qualify under the rebate program. A minimum threshold will also ensure that administrative cost does not exceed rebate amount.

Recommendation - It is staff's recommendation that the program set a threshold of \$200 as the minimum rebate provided under the program. This means that properties who pay less than \$1,000 in property taxes would not be eligible for a rebate.

4. Does Council wish to require owners to submit property insurance certificates as a part of their application?

Recommendation – It is staff's recommendation that the program requires that a copy of property insurance certificates be included as part of the application process. This provides additional assurance to the Town that any funds that the Town provides for reinvestment in the property will be protected in the event of a catastrophic event at the property.

5. Does Council wish to set specific terms regarding the building occupancy for 10 months of the year? For example if it is a building that has both commercial/residential space, is the property eligible if the upper level residential space is occupied while the lower level commercial space is not? Alternatively, if an upper level residential space was renovated for the purpose of acquiring tenants, but was vacant during the renovation, would it qualify?

Recommendation – It is staff's recommendation that the program enables a residential property to qualify if vacant more than two months as a result of renovation work to the residential space.

6. Does Council wish to allow property to be eligible to receive all three grant programs (Façade Improvement, Heritage Grant and Heritage Property Tax Rebate) during the same year?

Recommendation – It is staff’s recommendation that property owner’s be eligible to receive funding from the two grant programs up to a total combined maximum amount of 50% of total project costs AND be eligible for the Heritage Tax Rebate. This approach would consider the granting programs to be separate and distinct from the tax rebate program.

SUMMARY

This report provides Council with an update on how much additional funding would be made available if the existing grant programs (Façade Improvement and Heritage Grant) were amended to a total combined maximum amount of 50% of total project costs. This report also provides a proposed two tier system for the Heritage Property Tax rebate program and cost implications of a rebate program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Province of Ontario contributes to the program by funding the education portion of the property tax rebate program. The municipality recoups the cost of the education tax reduction by deducting the appropriate amount from the remittances it makes to school boards.

100% Participation Rate			
Amount of Relief	Municipal Contribution	Education Contribution	Total
10%	\$ 51,789	\$ 21,765	\$ 73,554
15%	\$ 77,684	\$ 32,647	\$ 110,331
20%	\$ 103,578	\$ 43,529	\$ 147,107
25%	\$ 129,473	\$ 54,412	\$ 183,885
30%	\$ 155,368	\$ 65,294	\$ 220,662
35%	\$ 181,262	\$ 76,177	\$ 257,439
40%	\$ 207,157	\$ 87,059	\$ 294,216

75% Participation Rate			
Amount of Relief	Municipal Contribution	Education Contribution	Total
10%	\$ 38,842	\$ 16,324	\$ 55,166
15%	\$ 58,263	\$ 24,485	\$ 82,748
20%	\$ 77,684	\$ 32,647	\$ 110,331
25%	\$ 97,105	\$ 40,809	\$ 137,914
30%	\$ 116,526	\$ 48,971	\$ 165,497
35%	\$ 135,947	\$ 57,133	\$ 193,080
40%	\$ 155,368	\$ 65,294	\$ 220,662

50% Participation Rate			
Amount of Relief	Municipal Contribution	Education Contribution	Total
10%	\$ 25,895	\$ 10,883	\$ 36,777
15%	\$ 38,842	\$ 16,324	\$ 55,166
20%	\$ 51,789	\$ 21,765	\$ 73,554
25%	\$ 64,737	\$ 27,206	\$ 91,943
30%	\$ 77,684	\$ 32,647	\$ 110,331
35%	\$ 90,631	\$ 38,089	\$ 128,720
40%	\$ 103,579	\$ 43,530	\$ 147,108

25% Participation Rate			
Amount of Relief	Municipal Contribution	Education Contribution	Total
10%	\$ 12,947	\$ 5,441	\$ 18,388
15%	\$ 19,421	\$ 8,162	\$ 27,583
20%	\$ 25,895	\$ 10,882	\$ 36,777
25%	\$ 32,368	\$ 13,603	\$ 45,971
30%	\$ 38,842	\$ 16,324	\$ 55,166
35%	\$ 45,316	\$ 19,044	\$ 64,360
40%	\$ 51,789	\$ 21,765	\$ 73,554

10% Participation Rate			
Amount of Relief	Municipal Contribution	Education Contribution	Total
10%	\$ 5,179	\$ 2,177	\$ 7,356
15%	\$ 7,768	\$ 3,265	\$ 11,033
20%	\$ 10,358	\$ 4,353	\$ 14,711
25%	\$ 12,947	\$ 5,441	\$ 18,388
30%	\$ 15,537	\$ 6,529	\$ 22,066
35%	\$ 18,126	\$ 7,618	\$ 25,744
40%	\$ 20,716	\$ 8,706	\$ 29,422

OTHERS CONSULTED

Jim Brown, Director of Finance
 Christine Brine, Tax Collector
 Brent Kittmer, CAO / Clerk
 Susan Luckhardt, Planning Coordinator


ATTACHMENTS

Central Commercial District Heritage Conservation & Community Improvement Area Overlay

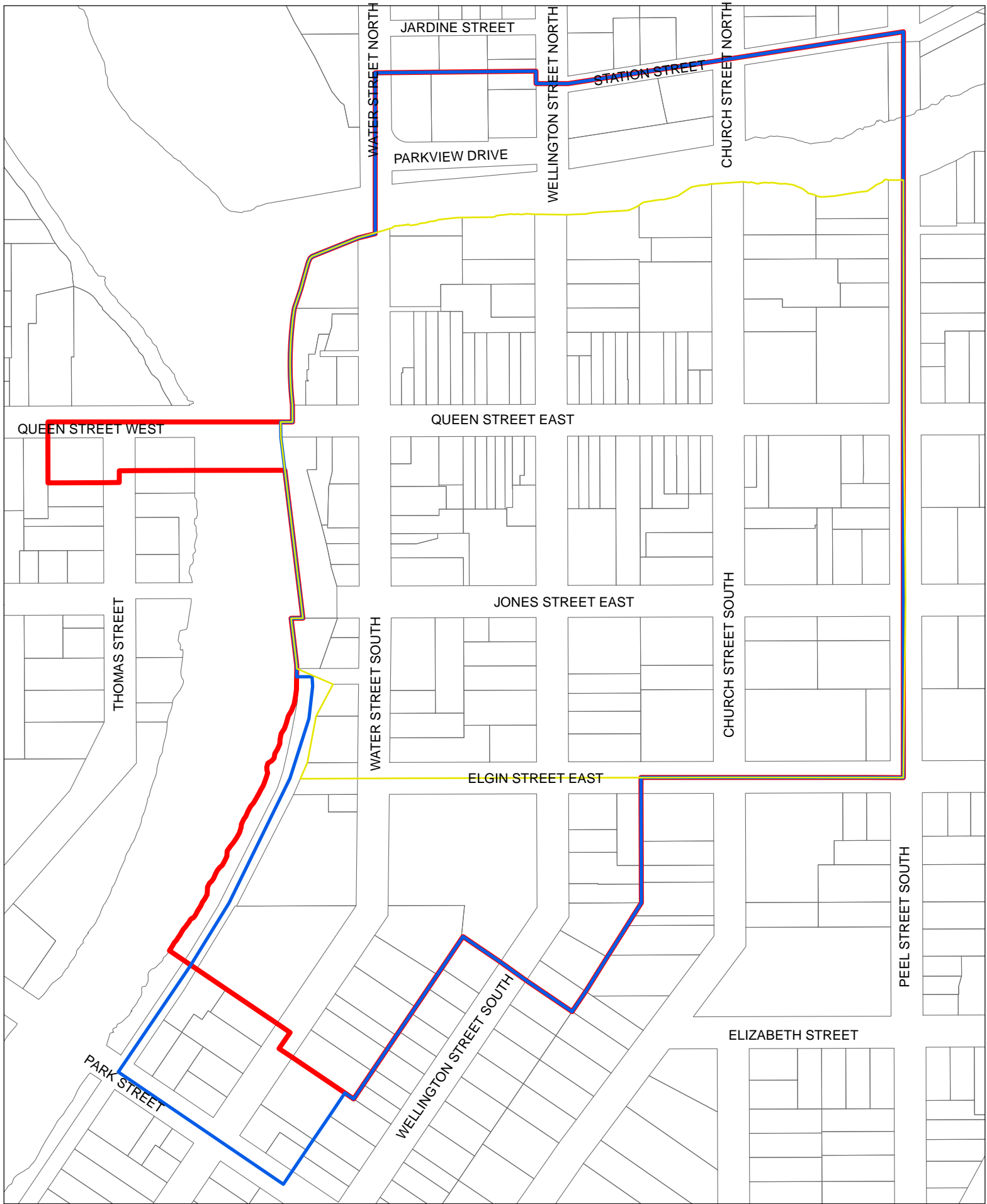
Respectfully submitted,



 Trisha McKibbin
 Director of Corporate Services / Deputy Clerk



 Brent Kittmer
 CAO / Clerk



- Heritage Conservation District
- Community Improvement Area
- Central Commercial District

**Central Commercial District,
Heritage Conservation District &
Community Improvement Area
Overlay**

