



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: November 12, 2024
To: Mayor and Council
From: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer
Report Number: COU24-133
Attachments: None

Title: Consideration of Intent to Declare as Surplus – 270 Water Street

Objective: To consider information regarding the Discovery Centre at the Normal School [former Teachers' College, former Stratford Normal School] building and property at 270 Water Street and to seek direction of Council with respect to potential disposition of the building excluding the eastern balance of the property.

Background: Municipalities in Ontario have authority under the Municipal Act, 2001 to acquire and dispose of property to meet evolving local priorities and to deliver municipal services. Stratford City Council adopted Sale and Other Disposal of Land Policy P.3.1 to set out how municipal property is disposed of by City Council. This Policy guides the process should direction be given by Council to initiate disposal.

Municipalities consider disposal of municipal property/assets where:

- private sector ownership may better serve the interests of residents and the community.
- the buyer is more likely to be able to deliver the desired regeneration of the asset.
- the City's capital can be repurposed into new assets or existing assets which better serve the delivery of core municipal services and Council's Strategic Priorities.
- Certain assets are no longer serving a key municipal need and selling can contribute to sustainable financing.

The Discovery Centre was purchased by the City from the Province of Ontario. The City has owned the property since 2001; however, the building has not been used for City operations.

Community groups came together to repurpose the former Teachers' College to the Discovery Centre for arts, museum, gallery, some retail space, community space and space for the Festival Theatre. The Management Board leased the building from the

City and were to raise funds for renovations and upkeep of the building. Eventually, the arrangement was ended by the Parties and the Board disbanded.

The Discovery Centre was then leased to the Stratford Shakespearean Festival of Canada in 2009, and the current lease extension expires in April 2025.

Analysis: As part of an internal review of the City's property assets, it has been identified the City has no space need for this building for municipal purposes in this location.

Staff are requesting direction of Council to initiate the intent to dispose of surplus municipal property with respect to the building at 270 Water Street, excluding the eastern balance of the property which could be retained by the City for parkland.

In accordance with the City's P.3.1 Sale and Other Disposition of Land policy, staff are also requesting direction from Council to schedule a public meeting to hear from the public with respect to the potential intent to declare as surplus and dispose of the subject property.

Following the public meeting, a report will be prepared for Council including a summary of the public feedback and options for Council's consideration. At that time, Council could then consider whether or not to declare the building as surplus to the needs of the municipal corporation, determine the method disposal and set the sale price.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There is no impact on the current year operating budget as a result of this report.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

This will depend on the decision of Council with respect to intent to dispose of the property or to retain.

Link to asset management plan and strategy:

This will depend on the decision of Council with respect to intent to dispose of the property or to retain.

Legal considerations:

City Council has received legal advice related to this proposed disposal of land.

Insurance considerations:

The proposed disposal of this land does not add risk to the City's insurance coverage.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Not applicable: This report is to seek direction of Council with respect to holding a public meeting in accordance with Policy P.3.1.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Not applicable: This report is to seek direction of Council.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Report titled, "Consideration of Intent to Declare as Surplus – 270 Water Street (COU24-133)," be received;

THAT staff be authorized to initiate the intent to dispose of 270 Water Street process with the intent to maintain the building and heritage designations, excluding the eastern balance of the property;

THAT staff be authorized to schedule a public meeting in accordance with Policy P.3.1 Sale and Other Disposition of Land to hear from members of the public with respect to the potential disposition of this building, excluding the eastern balance of the property;

AND THAT a follow up report be prepared including a summary of the public feedback from the public meeting, for Council's consideration.

Prepared by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

Recommended by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer