



Subject: Memorandum of Understanding with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation

To: Council

From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Report Number: 2024-49

Meeting Date: April 23, 2024

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Officer Report 2024-49 be received; and

That Council approve the By-law attached as Appendix A, being a By-law to Authorize Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation Regarding the Installation of Artwork on St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation Property; and

That the Mayor and Acting City Clerk be authorized to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation attached as Appendix A.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of an initiative designed to beautify parts of Port Colborne with urban art and seek Council approval to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation (SLSMC) to complete this project on Seaway buildings.

Background:

Economic Development staff have been searching for ways to beautify and visually enhance the City, especially in the main arteries and entrances to the City, to create welcoming public spaces, empower young artists to showcase their talent, and to create something intriguing for the community.

The Vacancy Mural Pilot Project is a proposed initiative which will focus on connecting local artists and vacant property owners to create temporary murals on SLSMC managed infrastructure facades. As no budget was allocated for contracting an artist, staff reached out to see if the heads of high school art departments would support this initiative, which was met with a favourable response.

City staff from the Economic Development, By-law, and Fire Divisions met to discuss a Vacancy Initiative that would allow the City to beautify some of the boarded-up buildings to brighten up the areas and foster community pride.

City staff approached the SLSMC in April 2023 to gauge their interest and discuss the process the City would need to follow to bring improvements to the properties and structures they own. In November 2023, the SLSMC provided guidance on the process in early January of 2024 for a pilot project.

Discussion:

The project will beautify and animate the bricked up and boarded up windows on buildings at the Main Street Lift Bridge and along Welland Street.

The By-law Division has a Vacant Properties Master List that includes approximately twenty-five (25) properties. The City's By-Law Division works with owners of vacant properties to board up the properties through voluntary compliance. If property owners do not comply, a By-law Officer may issue an order that could result in the work being completed at the owner's expense.

Buildings on Seaway property do not fall under the City's purview, however a number of buildings on Seaway property currently appear boarded up and uninviting. These are in prominent locations entering the City and along Main Street and Welland Street.

The SLSMC has provided the MOU attached as Appendix A for Council approval, with the goal of having the artwork installed in the spring of 2024. Lakeshore Catholic Secondary School is currently mocking up a mural for a SLSMC property.

Internal Consultations:

Economic Development consulted with By-law Division, Fire Department, and Clerks' Division.

Financial Implications:

The City is supplying the materials at a cost of between \$500 and \$750 for the pilot program from the Economic Development and Tourism Services Division budget. The Seaway will be installing the artwork once it has been provided.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillars of the strategic plan:

- Welcoming, Livable, Healthy Community
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Conclusion:

Staff recommend that Council approve authorizing the Mayor and Acting City Clerk to sign the SLSMC MOU for a City beautification project for SLSMC properties.

Appendices:

- a. By-law to Authorize Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation Regarding the Installation of Artwork on St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation Property

Respectfully submitted,

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Report Approval:

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.