



**Subject: MOU between the City of Port Colborne and Port Cares for an Affordable Housing Development**

**To: Council**

**From: Chief Administrative Office**

Report Number: 2021-54

Meeting Date: February 22, 2021

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### **Recommendation:**

That Chief Administrative Office Report 2021-54 be received;

That Council approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Port Colborne and Port Cares for an Affordable Housing Development; and

That a by-law to enter into a MOU with Port Cares be brought forward.

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### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a brief overview of the MOU between the City of Port Colborne and Port Cares regarding a proposed affordable housing project for Chestnut Park. A copy of the MOU is attached to this report.

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### **Background:**

Port Colborne City Council has identified affordable housing as a priority and directed staff to explore funding options, innovative approaches, and strategic partnerships to address affordable housing shortages and wait lists in the community. Port Cares has been developing plans to create more affordable housing units and have been reviewing the availability and suitability of various sites in Port Colborne.

On November 24, 2020, Port Cares' Board of Directors approved a recommendation from their Property and Capital Committee to work with the City to acquire the Chestnut Park property and construct an affordable housing structure. At the December 14, 2020 Council meeting, Council passed a motion to declare Chestnut Park as surplus and support in principle an affordable housing project proposed by Port Cares.

Council also agreed to transfer the Chestnut Park property to Port Cares for \$1 pending the completion of a mutually satisfactory agreement; that staff prepare a Lockview Park revitalization plan; and that staff be directed to proceed with a rezoning application, a survey, and a development agreement.

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### **Discussion:**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) provides a non-binding framework for both parties and clarity on key project issues, responsibilities, and timelines. This document also provides information and transparency for the project itself and the partnership between the City of Port Colborne and Port Cares.

The MOU will be helpful to Port Cares in their funding application to CMHC and in their ongoing conversations with Port Cares Board of Directors, Niagara Regional Housing, community stakeholders and other potential funding partners.

It is agreed that both parties, after Port Cares have completed their due diligence and have key project details and financing in place, will enter into a definitive purchase agreement for the lands to be legally conveyed from the City to Port Cares.

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### **Internal Consultations:**

The MOU and Appendix have been reviewed by the City Solicitor, CAO, and staff from Planning and Development, and Engineering and Operations.

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### **Financial Implications:**

There are no financial implications by approving this report. The MOU between the parties stipulates that neither party will be required or legally bound to carry out any of the matters outlined in Appendix A that forms part of the MOU until they are incorporated into the purchase agreement.

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### **Public Engagement:**

At the time of writing this report, there is a Public Meeting scheduled for February 16, 2021 to consider a zoning amendment to rezone the property from Public-Parks (P2) to R4 to permit the construction of an apartment building.

Also, as directed by Council and the CAO, staff are bringing a report to Council in March outlining the details of a community engagement plan to obtain input regarding the redevelopment of nearby Lockview Park.

## **Conclusion:**

The City of Port Colborne and Port Cares have formed a partnership to address the lack of affordable housing. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and Port Cares has been developed to foster mutual understanding, a collaborative approach, and help guide next steps in the research and due diligence phase of the affordable housing project proposed by Port Cares.

The MOU is non-binding, but it demonstrates the commitment and intentions of both parties in working together to create more affordable housing units in Port Colborne. Once Port Cares has completed their due diligence, both parties will enter into a formal purchase agreement to convey the property. Staff recommend that Council approve the MOU.

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## **Appendices:**

- a. Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Port Colborne and Port Cares

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 approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.