



**Subject: Management of Roselawn Centre**

**To: Council**

**From: Chief Administrative Office**

Report Number: 2021-108

Meeting Date: May 10, 2021

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**Recommendation:**

That Chief Administrative Office Report 2021-108 be received;

That Council direct the Manager of Strategic Initiatives to stop the Port Colborne Innovation, Creativity and Culinary Incubator;

That Council appoint a member of the Friends of Roselawn Centre to The Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum Board; and

That the Director/Curator of the Port Colborne Historical & Marine Museum be responsible for the general management of Roselawn Centre.

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the appointment of a member of the Friends of Roselawn Centre to the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum Board and for the Director/Curator of the Port Colborne Historical & Marine Museum to be responsible for managing the Roselawn Centre. Staff are also seeking direction from Council on the Port Colborne Innovation, Creativity and Culinary Incubator initiative proposed in the summer of 2020.

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**Background:**

The City assumed ownership of the Roselawn Centre (Roselawn) in 1996 and has worked with various groups to maintain the building and continue community access. The events and activities that have taken place at Roselawn over the years are generally based in arts and culture.

All programming at Roselawn was suspended in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the building has remained closed ever since. Between then and the writing of this report, Economic Development & Tourism Services staff have been tasked with examining the situation at Roselawn and exploring new opportunities to enhance its offerings.

MDB Insight Inc. and Gow Hastings Architects made a presentation to Council on August 24, 2020, regarding the Port Colborne Innovation, Creativity and Culinary Incubator Feasibility Study. The study proposed Roselawn as the site for this incubator.

Staff consultations with the Friends of Roselawn Centre in recent months suggest a desire to see Roselawn continue as a home to community events and activities of an arts, cultural and historical nature.

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## **Discussion:**

Over the past several months, there have been ongoing discussions amongst City staff, individual Councillors and the Friends of Roselawn Centre regarding options for governance, management oversight and realizing a new vision and path for Roselawn moving forward.

The Friends of Roselawn Centre's winter 2021 newsletter indicates an interest in aligning with the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum. Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum Board ("the Museum Board") Chair Brian Heaslip, said at the Board's last Annual General Meeting that "...as a volunteer-run committee of Council...[we] welcome the possibility of exploring areas of mutual interest."

If Council views the alignment as suitable, then it is recommended that a member of the Friends of Roselawn Centre be appointed to the Museum Board. The appointee will act as a liaison between the two volunteer boards and ensure the Friends of Roselawn Centre's interests are represented and protected.

The Museum's mission is "to serve Port Colborne's residents and visitors by preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting the artifacts and archives of Port Colborne and Humberstone." The 2018-2022 Strategic Plan of the Museum recognized an interest in growth and expansion. Although there was no specific mention of Roselawn Centre in this Strategic Plan, the Director/Curator of the Port Colborne Historical & Marine Museum and her staff are willing and able to assume the role of managing Roselawn.

If Council chooses to interpret Roselawn as a heritage asset, oversight from the Museum Board and management by the Director/Curator can help maintain the building.

The implementation of this management structure for Roselawn will need additional staff recommendations on areas like facility condition, capital projects funding,

operational budgeting, staffing and day-to-day programming. Not all of these areas will require new strategies and objectives since the City's Arts & Culture Master Plan and Parks & Recreation Master Plan already serve as valuable resources to draw from. Subsequent reports with staff recommendations will be provided once a more detailed redevelopment and renewal plan is developed.

Following through on an action item from the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, MDB Insight Inc. and Gow Hasting Architects were retained last year to determine the need, interest, and feasibility of having an Innovation, Creativity and Culinary Incubator at Roselawn. Their proposal, presented to Council on August 24, 2020, concluded that the City should focus on providing space for business innovation and creating a culinary incubator.

While the ideas in the proposal are bold and visionary, City staff are recommending that Council not proceed with this initiative for the following reasons:

- The estimated cost of this initiative is almost \$2 million. Given other important capital projects and strategic priorities (e.g. water/wastewater infrastructure, investments in asset management, downtown CIP project, cruise ship welcoming centre, parks and recreation facility upgrades, etc.), financing this initiative will be a challenge. Successfully securing grants from federal-provincial funding programs to help cover a major portion of the costs is unknown. Also, these funding programs tend to be very competitive, require significant municipal contributions and enforce strict eligibility criteria.
- The City does not have the staffing capacity to resource this initiative appropriately. New full-time positions would need to be created to assist with the planning, development, implementation and oversight, in addition to day-to-day operations and programming. Any new positions would need to be funded from the tax levy as federal-provincial grant programs will not provide operating funds. Furthermore, any revenues from the proposed culinary programs will not be enough to cover expenses.
- Based on the current landscape, there are already twelve (12) agencies and non-profit organizations in the Niagara region that provide support for small businesses and entrepreneurs and serve as incubators for innovation and experimentation. Providing space for incubation and business accelerators in Port Colborne has been widely discussed amongst City staff. There is still an opportunity to establish an incubator in Port Colborne, assuming that another public or private space will become available and show potential.
- Niagara College and its Canadian Food and Wine Institute have state-of-the-art facilities with commercial kitchens that serve as a living lab for students. Their world-renowned programs, instructor expertise, reputation, industry networks, partnerships and resources are all ideal qualities to make a culinary incubator successful. Simply put, the City doesn't have the same advantages.

- The past successes of Roselawn should dictate its future, which is to maintain a focus on arts, culture, heritage, tourism and special events. This statement is supported by the City's Arts and Culture Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Roselawn's past and future have also been reinforced and solidified through a new five-year management agreement between the City and Lighthouse Theatre.
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### **Internal Consultations:**

The CAO engaged the Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Director/Curator of the Port Colborne Historical & Marine Museum and Tourism Coordinator in consulting on this matter.

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### **Financial Implications:**

There are no financial implications to approving this report. Any requests for funding the continued operation of Roselawn Centre will come to Council for approval.

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### **Public Engagement:**

The Director/Curator of the Port Colborne Historical & Marine Museum and the Tourism Coordinator engaged the Friends of Roselawn and listened to their views on this matter.

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### **Conclusion:**

The COVID-19 global pandemic and temporary closure of public facilities has given City staff and key stakeholders an opportunity to pause, reflect, and strategize a new vision and path forward for Roselawn Centre. As part one of a multi-phased plan, City staff are recommending: (1) a hybrid governance model by appointing a member from the Friends of Roselawn Centre to the Museum Board to serve as a liaison on behalf of Roselawn Centre; (2) management oversight with the Director/Curator of the Museum being responsible for Roselawn Centre and day-to-day operations and programming; and (3) the City not proceed with the proposed Innovation, Creativity, and Culinary Incubator initiative presented last August. Staff will be bringing forward another report this summer with ideas and recommendations as part two of the Roselawn Centre redevelopment and renewal plan.

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## **Appendices:**

- a. Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum 2018-2022 Strategic Plan

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.