



Development Services Staff Report

Report Title: Heritage Train Station – Funding Request
Report Number: DS 34-2021
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Reviewed By: Jeremy Vink
Final Review: Senior Management Team

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Township of Woolwich, considering Report DS34-2021 respecting the Heritage Train Station Funding Request, authorize the release of \$60,000, which was paid by King and 86 Developments Limited (i.e., Smart Centres) in 2008 and currently held in trust by the Township, and distribute such funds to the Waterloo Central Railway for the sole purpose of constructing a heritage train station building and installing the associated site works in the manner outlined in Report DS 34-2021.

Background/Comments:

The Township has received a request from the Waterloo Central Railway (WCR) to access \$60,000 in funding, held in trust, to finance the construction of a heritage railway station along the Region's railway right-of-way, adjacent to the St. Jacobs farmer's market property (see Appendix 'A').

WCR is a licensed shortline railway operator under the Shortline Railway Act of Ontario and is owned by the Southern Ontario's Locomotive Restoration Society, a registered non-profit charity. They currently operate a heritage train service during daytime hours between Waterloo (at Northfield Drive) and Elmira. Their service generally runs on market days (Thursdays and Saturday plus Tuesday in the summer) and Fridays from April (starts on Maple Syrup Fest) to Christmas.

The Township holds at total of \$60,000, in trust, for the purpose of financing the construction of a train station building and associated site works. The monies were paid to the Township in 2008 by Smart Centres (on behalf of King and 86 Developments Limited) as a condition of approval for their power centre commercial development within

the Stockyards Urban Area. It is the Township's responsibility before distributing the funds to evaluate and ensure that any such request:

- is from an established railway operator providing a tourist/heritage passenger train service along the Regional owned spur line within Woolwich;
- is for a train station that is to be located within the Stockyards Urban Area in proximity of the St. Jacobs farmer's market;
- is for works directly related to the construction of the train station building as well other associated site works;
- is supported/approved by the Region which owns the railway spur line; and
- includes detailed costing and other funding sources to finance the project.

The above criteria shall demonstrate whether WCR's proposal is financially viable and will be delivered in a timely manner. It will also assure Smart Centres that the funds that they paid will be distributed directly towards its intended use.

Since 2007 WCR has been operating a well established and successful heritage railway passenger service along the Region's railway spur. They are now in position to construct an approximate 8' by 24' heritage-designed train station building within the Region's railway right-of-way adjacent to Farmer's Market Road, between the St. Jacobs farmer's market and the Value Village store. The station will be used as shelter for its passengers, opened only when the service is operating, and it may eventually accommodate an automated ticket machine. The proposed design of the building is based on stations constructed in the late 1800's and early 1900's used by the Grand Trunk Railway, the predecessor of the Canadian National Railway (see Appendix 'B' – Building Design).

Other project features and details include:

- The station will not be occupied by employees, nor serviced by water, sanitary or hydro, although electrical service may be considered in the future or possibly solar power for lighting only;
- The station building will be designed to be barrier-free and accessible (e.g., ramp and wider door);
- The station will be anchored by helical piles;
- Pedestrian access is via the municipal sidewalk on Farmer's Market Road;
- No platform lighting is proposed as hours of service are during the daytime;
- Benches are kept to a minimum and will be anchored to the asphalt;
- Garbage receptacles will available during hours of operation and locked up at the end of the day;
- Existing trees will be maintained; and

- Parking is available on the Value Village property. For Council's information Smart Centre was also required to develop and maintain a minimum of 50 parking spaces on the Value Village property for passengers/employees of the train service. The provision of such parking is administered through an approved Site Plan and Agreement registered on the property.

WCR believes that the proposed station and its design will enhance the heritage train service experience, add another attraction to the surrounding area and potentially provide an alternative revenue stream in attracting film/tv production companies to utilize the heritage railway facilities.

WCR has provided costings of the project and their funding sources. A significant portion of the site and preparation works to accommodate the proposed train station has been completed and paid by WCR which includes:

- Preparation of the site plan, grading and drainage and building designs;
- Removal of two temporary open shelters;
- Installation of the grading and drainage works,
- Installation of the asphalt paving platform along the east side of the railway spur that connects to the sidewalk system on Farmer's Market Road, east of the railway (Note: a future asphalt platform has been designed on the west side of the railway in the event that future expansion and development of the farmer's market property is considered); and
- Site preparation for the future installation of the helical piles that will anchor the train station building.

Total cost of the above-noted works that has been paid and funded by WCR to date is approximately \$138,000.

WCR advises that the \$60,000 funds being requested will go towards the cost (material, labour and fees) to construct and anchor the train station building estimated at approximately \$40,000 while the remaining monies (i.e., \$20,000) will be used to offset some of the cost already paid to complete the associated site works (e.g., installing grading, drainage, platform, etc.). In addition, WCR budget includes other in-kind or volunteer service/cost to paint and shingle the building, update the site plan for Regional approval and other miscellaneous items at a cost of approximately \$9,600. A copy of WCR entire proposal is attached as Appendix 'C'.

A part of their submission includes a Municipal Consent granted by the Region allowing WCR to proceed with the remaining works to construct the train station building in accordance with an approved site plan attached as Appendix 'D'.

WCR has submitted a building permit application with the Township for the proposed train station. They indicate that if Council agrees to release of the \$60,000 funds, they can immediately begin construction this fall after the building permit is issued. Once started, construction will take approximately 30 days to complete.

Upon reviewing the request, Staff is satisfied that:

- WCR's proposal is financially viable based on the estimated cost to construct the building (material, labour and fees) relative to the funding that will be available,
- the project will be implemented in a timely manner (tentatively this year) and managed by an established and successful heritage railway operator,
- WCR has already made a significant financial investment (\$138,000) to complete the installation of the necessary infrastructure and site works to prepare the site for the train station building;
- the \$60,000 will go directly to the construction of the train station building plus offset some of their previous site preparation cost that WCR has incurred to date; and
- the necessary approvals are in place by the Region who owns and has jurisdiction over the spur line.

If Council supports the request, Staff would immediately forward \$20,000 to WCR to offset cost that have already incurred for the related site works and then forward the remaining funds (\$40,000) to them upon receiving the necessary receipts from the contractor/supplier constructing the station verifying that their services have been rendered.

Interdepartmental Impacts:

None

Financial Impacts:

Payment of \$60,000 funds to WCR, which was paid by King and 86 Development Limited (i.e., Smart Centres) and held in trust by the Township.

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Planning for Growth and Exploring Economic Development Opportunities

- *Be 'ahead of the curve' in planning for future growth – providing funds for future train station.*
- *Explore all partnerships/collaborations that make fiscal sense.*
Infrastructure Maintenance and Transportation Planning
- *Plan for alternative and active transportation systems and networks that allow and support multi-modal forms and connecting links between communities.*

Conclusion:

Staff recommends that Council authorize the release of \$60,000, which was paid by King and 86 Developments Limited (i.e., Smart Centres) in 2008 and currently held in trust by the Township and distribute such funds to the WCR for the sole purpose of constructing a heritage train station building and associated site works upon receiving the respective invoices from the various contractors/suppliers.

Attachments:

Appendix 'A' – Location Map

Appendix 'B' – Proposed Building Design

Appendix 'C' – WCR Detailed Request and Financial Implications

Appendix 'D' – Site Plan Approved by the Region