

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

QUARTERLY UPDATE

DATE: February 20, 2024

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Tiffany MacLaren, Manager, Community and Economic Development

SUBJECT: Community & Economic Development Quarterly Report – Q4 2023

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

The Community Services department had an extremely busy fourth quarter wrapping up our Bicentennial events, celebrating the holidays and planning for 2024. Highlights from this quarter included the unveiling of the Seven Grandfather installation, our second Yellow Bus Farm tour and our Bicentennial Harvest Dinner & Dance. Capping off the year our annual Light Up the Night celebration had what could be called our biggest crowd ever and was also live streamed across Canada and the US thanks to a special program sponsored by the Music Performance Trust Fund.

Staff and community partners continued advancing our bicentennial legacy projects that received funding through a Canadian Heritage grant. Late in December we received news from OMAFRA that we have been awarded \$12,000 through their Sustainable Agriculture Fund. This funding will be used to finance an Abattoir Feasibility Study in early 2024.

2023 PROJECT UPDATES/PENDING ITEMS:

Wednesday, January 17, 2024, exactly one year from our kick off event, the Municipality hosted a thank-you celebration for the volunteers and local partners who helped to make our Bicentennial year such an enormous success. 2023 was marked with nearly 50 events, taking place in each corner of the Municipality. Events ranged from the RCMP Musical Ride, Come Home to Pakenham Weekend and Millworkers' Walk Re-enactment to farm tours and musicals, as well as an extra special Light Up the Night and the unveiling of an Indigenous public art installation, The Seven Gifts.

A slideshow capturing the breadth of activities that made up our year of celebrations can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/nT5pP4AlhIU>. A Bicentennial time capsule containing memories and significant items recommended by the various Bicentennial working groups will be buried by the Bicentennial Tree at the Mississippi Mills Municipal Office, to be opened in 25 years (2048).

In 2023 the Municipality was awarded \$103,075 in funding for Bicentennial Legacy Projects. These projects involved a variety of partners who were responsible for contributing financially. A stunning new grandstand/gazebo will be built in Metcalf

Geoheritage Park in 2024 in partnership with MRPC. A gazebo has been in MRPC's approved long-term plans for the park. This funding from Heritage Canada is allowing this project to happen sooner than anticipated. MRPC contracted Architect Peter Mansfield and Cleland Jardine Engineering to design the landmark. MM Community Services and Facilities Department staff will be managing the build and installation through the spring and summer. An unveiling and celebration will be planned for later summer/fall.

Legacy funding from Canada Heritage also played a significant role in supporting the construction of a covered patio/stage in Clayton, covering 50% of the total cost. This valuable addition will enable the Clayton community to organize various outdoor activities regardless of the weather conditions, providing a versatile space for gatherings. By receiving this grant, the community was able to reduce their fundraising efforts and allocate a portion of their existing funds towards other crucial projects.

The Seven Gifts, Indigenous public art installation in Riverfront Park, received significant funding from this program as well and truly fit the legacy requirements of the grant outline. Funding has also been set aside for additional interpretive panels that will celebrate history across the municipality. Locations & content will be finalized soon. We have until March 2025 to finalize these projects.

2023 Neighbourhood Microgrant Program was very successful. Although not fully subscribed 11 grants of \$200 were awarded. \$3600 was available in the budget. We hope to encourage more participation from Pakenham and Ramsay for 2024. A summary poster for our 2023 Microgrants is attached.

2023 Neighbourhood Micro Grant Program							
Type of Activity Event	Other Support	Location	Ward	Live Music Y/N	Municipal Equipment Provided	Previous Grant Applicant	Participants #s
Community BBQs (8 events)		2 Parks 1 Green Space 5 Block Parties	5 Almonte 1 Ramsay (Blakeney)	Yes/No (5 of 8)	4 of 8	1 - 1st year 7 return events	25-50 Per Event
Music Jamboree (1 event)		James St. Park	Almonte	Yes	yes	1st year	200
The "Big Give" (Charitable Community Event) (1 event)	The Hub, Hilltop Tax Services	Community Centre Lawn	Almonte	Yes	Yes	1st Year	150
"Delve" (Author Engagement) (1 event)	Mill St. Books	OVC - Coffee Shop	Almonte	No	No	1st year	20

KPIs:

Almonte Old Town Hall was bustling with activity throughout the fourth quarter. We currently have a rotation of 4 casual part-time AOTH Event Assistants who are on site for public events.

Juggling priorities has been a challenge with our AOTH bookings. Staff are working on a booking policy that will come to COW for approval. With the return to pre-covid events, and the increased interest in the facility, it's becoming extremely difficult to accommodate everyone. Weekly recreational booking clients would prefer to book for a year (or more) at a time. Accommodating this could mean the Municipality loses out on special events that interest larger groups of residents. AOTH Wedding bookings have also steadily increased over the last two years. The trend seems to be towards smaller events that suit our venue. These bookings pay a premium and help to fill gaps in our schedule, but one wedding can prevent us from booking up to 3 public events. We are currently preventing wedding clients from booking more than a year before their date. We are also encouraging our regular concert and theater user groups to plan 18 months out. Public ticketed events create entertainment for residents and visitors and have been shown to have positive indirect or secondary economic impact with attendees visiting downtown to shop and eat when they are in town for the event.

AOTH Revenue October, November & December 2023

Event Name	October - December		
	# of Events	Total Rev.*	Surcharge
Public (Ticketed) Events			
Almonte In Concert	2	\$1,249.80	\$730.00
Folkus (Concerts)	0 (No Fall Concerts in 2023)		
Festival of Small Halls (Concerts)	3	\$1,975.86	\$908.00
Standing Room Only (Concert and Dance)	1	\$161.71	\$86.00
Sub-Total (Concerts)	6	\$3,387.37	\$1,724.00
Cheerfully Made (Craft Show)	1	\$1,071.52	\$200.00
Valley Players (Theater)	1	\$1,776.42	\$382.00
Spinning Yarns - The Musical (Theater)	1	\$6,771.51	\$2,160.00
Sub-Total (Theater)	3	\$8,547.93	\$2,542.00

Private Events			
Weddings	3	\$2,448.71	
Funerals/Celebration of Life	0	N/A	
Parties/Anniversaries/ Music Nights	1	\$309.70	\$95.00
Fundraisers (private)	1	\$141.54	\$41.75
Meetings/Training	1	\$197.36	\$51.87
Sub-Total	6	\$3,097.31	\$188.62
Recreation Bookings (outside contractors)			
Yoga (multiple clients and time slots)	11 wks	\$2,667.00	
Choir	9 wks	\$406.80	
Dance (Youth)	10 wks	\$723.20	
Fitness	7 wks	\$290.69	
Sub-Total		\$4,087.69	
Total Surcharge Collected			\$4,654.62
Grand Total September to October 2023 (* incl. Surcharge)		\$20,191.82	

Business Updates:

The Community has been very excited to see the return of Beckers to its former Almonte, Ottawa St. location. Sanjeev Narula held a grand opening and ribbon cutting in December. Sanjeev recently owned another convenience store in Carleton Place. He expressed how he felt welcomed by the community and is excited to be in the Friendly town.

At our December Business Breakfast we celebrated local businesses who were honoured at the 2023 Chamber of Commerce Awards. Christine Kitchen owner of Maker’s Lodge was nominated for the 2023 Entrepreneur of the Year category and LBL Excavation won the Business of the Year for 2023.

We also heard updates about Just Good Compost and the Witch Haus. Both businesses were selected for the Small Business Advisory’s Starter Company Plus Program. This competitive program comes with one-on-one coaching, specialized training and the opportunity for grant funding towards your business goals.

Interest and activity in our Business and Industrial Park continue to be steady. Sales were finalized on Lot 7, with construction expected to begin in late 2024. Council received and accepted offers on Lots 5 and 6 in early January. The new owner will begin working towards building permits in 2024, with construction on those lots expected in early 2025 and early 2026, respectively.

The construction on a four unit building on lot 8 owned by Joel Poff is well underway with the units already completely leased. Tenants are hoping to move in mid-2024.

Pokoloco opened their new Almonte location on Mill St. at the end of December. From their website “Pokoloco curates unique high-quality artisanal goods from around the world” In addition to wholesale, they have another storefront in Westborough. Pokoloco held a well attended grand opening reception on February 2nd.

The Rustic Barber a new barber shop at 98 Mills St. is holding their grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony on February 24th at 11:00AM. Stop by to see how beautifully shop owner Danielle Spearman has transformed the space.

LOOKING AHEAD:

Abattoir Feasibility

The economy of Mississippi Mills relies heavily on the Agricultural sector. The shortage of abattoirs and meat processing plants continues to have a detrimental effect on our agricultural businesses. In addition, this issue presents considerable obstacles for local food retailers and restaurants in their efforts to access locally sourced meat. We received a \$12,000 Sustainable Agriculture Grant from OMAFRA. These funds along with budgeted dollars will be utilized to finance an Abattoir Feasibility Study, which is a vital first step in addressing the issue effectively.

We have hired Mallot Creek Group Inc (MCG) who are known for their extensive expertise in the food and agricultural industry. MCG offers integrated consulting services specializing in food, agriculture, and related industries with a focus on strategic business recommendations, process improvement, and food safety specialization. The final Abattoir Feasibility report will focus on outlining the current capacity and identifying the required capacity in the Mississippi Mills and surrounding region.

Staff applied to the Ontario Tourism Growth Program to fund a Culture and Heritage Route. If successful this project will involve several partners: Lanark County Tourism Association, Carleton Place and District Chamber of Commerce along with galleries and museums across Lanark County. Funding will be used to develop a map and suggested route in hard copy and online, similar to the existing Sip and Savour trail. This project is a good fit for the eligible fund activities: *“increase tourism benefits for communities by driving visitation from urban areas to rural areas, support economic, environmental and cultural sustainability”* and *“extend the tourism season.”*

2024 Municipal Grants

Mississippi Mills Municipal grant funding increased by 24% to \$42,528 (\$34,296 was awarded in 2023). \$72,810 in qualified funding requests were received. After considering the available funding, the grant criteria and the applications the 2024 Municipal Grant allocations were approved by Council on February 6. Sixteen organizations received funding for their projects. Grant recipients have been asked to sign a Grant Agreement outlining funding recognition and reporting requirements. This will help us ensure the public is aware of our Municipal Grant program and the great initiatives and events that are supported but this funding.

2024 Community Events

Our first business breakfast of 2024 is scheduled for February 28th at the Almonte Civitan Club. Executive Coach, Tina Collins, joining us this month to share her inspiring message of *Connecting People and Creating Hope*. We're moving our breakfast events around the Municipality again this year. Our May breakfast will be held at the Mississippi Golf Course and our September event will be in Pakenham. We will be back in Almonte for December.

A listing of Community events for 2024 is attached. This list is current as of 02/06/24 For ongoing updates to events and activities across the municipality visit www.mississippimills.ca/events.

Notable new or returning events for 2024:

A new spring Community Open House – similar to Mississippi Mills at a Glance. This event will be a showcase of what Mississippi Mills has to offer. It will provide an opportunity for local services, clubs and recreational activity providers to share information, recruit volunteers and collect registrations.

Mississippi Mills will be participating in Open Doors Ontario fall 2024. This provincial program encourages communities across the province to open the doors, gates and courtyards of their unique and most fascinating cultural sites so the public can explore the stories inside. This was a popular event and we have not participated in many years.

Mississippi Mills Beer Fest – will be a new event for Almonte, this outdoor event will highlight offerings from Mississippi Mills and the surrounding region. The event will include live entertainment and food retailers.

Gemmill Park – Music on Stage – Gemmill Park stage and bandshell cover will be kept in place for the month of July. We are offering use of the venue to the community for public events. Plans are still coming together. We hope this will make good use of this community asset and activate the park through the summer. At this time Folkus is working on a plan for a summer show, Carleton Place Community Band will be hosting a free concert and Almonte Legion Pipe Band plans to hold open rehearsals in the park.

Mississippi Mills Business Awards – this event recognizes long term and significant contributions of the business community. The last Mississippi Mills Business Awards were held before the pandemic. Staff are currently working on updates to the program

and policy, and which will come to COW for approval before being promoted to the public.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tiffany Maclaren,
Manager of Community &
Economic Development

Reviewed by:

Ken T. Kelly,
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Mississippi Mills 2023 Micro Grants Summary
2. Bicentennial Summary Flyer
3. 2024 Community Events Schedule