



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 7, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Auchmar Estate (PED12193(b)) (Ward 8)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 8
PREPARED BY:	David McCullagh (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1647
SUBMITTED BY:	Glen Norton Director, Economic Development Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

At the General Issues Committee (GIC) meeting of June 15, 2016, in consideration of Report (PED12193(a)), staff were directed as follows:

- (a) That the Auchmar Estate Operations Plan, attached as Appendix "A" to Report (PED16016), be received;
- (b) That Tourism and Culture Division staff be directed to continue with stabilization work obligated under the terms of the Heritage Conservation Easement administered by the Ontario Heritage Trust and to maintain the heritage resource in a stable condition with annual Capital Block funding;
- (c) That the Auchmar Estate and grounds remain in Public Ownership of the City of Hamilton;
- (d) That City staff in the Real Estate Section and the Planning and Economic Development Department be authorized and directed to explore a long-term lease or operating and management agreement, which is to include that capital repairs and maintenance be the financial responsibility of the lessee or the manager / operator, with any interested not-for-profit private parties; such as the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry XIIIth Regiment Auchmar Trust or other not-for-profit organizations, and report back to the General Issues Committee on the progress toward that end in six months;

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

- (e) That any long-term lease or operating and management agreement and use provide for reasonable public access to the buildings and grounds;
- (f) That Ontario Heritage Trust be consulted on any proposed use to confirm the use's alignment with the provisions in the Heritage Conservation Easement;
- (g) That, in the event no lessee or management and operations interest, can be secured after a period of one year, Planning and Economic Development Department staff be directed to report to the General Issues Committee with a work plan for the adaptive reuse of the Auchmar Estate.

Information:

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with an update on the proposal presented by associated members of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Regiment (RHLI), and any other prospects for a long-term lease or operating and management agreement.

In July 2016 City staff met with a representative of a local group that is associated with the RHLI ("Associated RHLI Group") that has expressed an interest in being part of a long-term solution for Auchmar Estate, in addition to other purposes, as a place to preserve and display the Regiments history. The meeting was a follow-up on the presentation made by the Associated RHLI Group to the GIC in June, with the intention of initiating discussions respecting a potential agreement to lease the Auchmar Estate lands from the City. At that time City staff outlined the objectives and requirements of the City, with an initial focus on determining a viable business plan for the Associated RHLI Group proposal – both from a heritage perspective and from an economic perspective. The Associated RHLI Group signalled that they were in the process of creating the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry XIIIth Regiment Auchmar Trust (the "Trust") through which they can raise and solicit the funds required, and that they expected to be in a position to provide City staff with a completed Feasibility Study in the Fall of 2016.

Publically, the Associated RHLI Group has been displaying its continued interest in pursuit of a proposed project at the Auchmar Estate through events such as making presentation at the Friends of Auchmar annual general meeting held at The Hamilton Club. To date, however, the Associated RHLI Group efforts on completing a formal business plan to be presented to the City for consideration have proven to be somewhat more complicated than anticipated and is taking more time than it originally had envisioned. Part of this delay may be attributed to conflicting overseas deployment schedules with members of the project team, as well as a lengthier than anticipated process of finalizing the incorporation of the Trust.

In April 2017 City staff was advised by the Associated RHLI Group that the Trust has been established, corporate sponsorship has been secured, and that the Associated

RHLI Group continues to seek more community and business partners to participate in the proposed project and financially support this endeavor. Additionally a Project Steering Committee has been established by the Associated RHLI Group in an effort to draw together appropriate skills and experience to support its initiative. Nevertheless, City staff has been frustrated in attempts to obtain concrete evidence of the viability of the Associated RHLI Group proposal and to meet with Group representatives to ensure that the process continues and maintains a healthy momentum.

To date, no other not-for-profit group has approached staff to demonstrate interest in pursuing an agreement respecting the Auchmar Estate.

Other Considerations:

Subsequent to Council's consideration of this matter in June 2016, City staff has also been approached by various other interested parties in the Auchmar Estate. Interests that purport to support the restoration of the Estate and provide for public access have included retirement residence, Montessori School, "signature" professional business office, bar / restaurant, and a small venue banquet / conference facility. Such uses may be compatible with the adaptive reuse of the Auchmar Estate as a complementary element of the Associated RHLI Group or other not-for-profit proposal, or independently, and would be subject to the terms of the Ontario Heritage Trust Conservation Easement and evaluated against the Council approved recommendations in Report (PED12193(a)) to determine suitability.

It should be noted, subject to any further direction provided by Council, that in accordance with Item 5(g) of the General Issues Committee Report (PED16016), as amended (Council June 22, 2016), staff are required to report back to General Issues Committee with a work plan for the adaptive reuse of the Auchmar Estate in the event that no lessee or management and operations interest can be secured after a period of one year. That time period is quickly approaching, requiring the City to make a decision respecting further consideration of the Associated RHLI Group proposal or further time to explore options. Failing that, it is staff's intention to move forward in accordance with recommendation 5(g) to implement the Auchmar Estate Operation Plan which was received June 22, 2016.

DM/am