TO: Bert Meunier, Chief Administrative Officer
FROM: Lance Thurston, Commissioner, Department of Community Services
PREPARED BY: Ann Pappert, Manager, Cultural Services Division
Lynda Breen, Supervisor, Programs & Events
Caroline Petznick, Curator, MacLachlan Woodworking Museum
DATE OF MEETING: 2004-03-02
SUBJECT: MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Tea Terrace

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

WHEREAS the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Business Plan, developed by the Museum Committee and staff, identifies the need to continue to increase visitations, revenues and community awareness of the museum;

AND WHEREAS the idea of adding a tea room to the museum has long been suggested as being advantageous to the strategic direction of the Museum;

AND WHEREAS the Museum Committee has developed and approved a sound business case for the development of a modest outdoor terrace to provide refreshments and food services to museum visitors, users of adjoining Grass Creek Park, cyclists, residents and travelers using scenic Highway 2;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council endorses the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Tea Terrace in principle and authorizes the Museum Committee and staff to proceed with the project on the understanding that all capital improvement costs will be funded by community fundraising and that construction of the terrace will not commence until all funds have been raised;

AND FURTHER THAT Council directs staff to work with the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Committee to establish a Friends Society for the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum, whose first project would be a fundraising campaign for the establishment of the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Tea Terrace.
ORIGIN/PURPOSE:
The purpose of this report is to obtain support to begin the fundraising activities necessary to realize the addition of an on-site refreshment service to enhance customer opportunities and to increase earned revenues for the Museum. It is recommended that fundraising be undertaken through the mechanism of a Friends Society and does not seek a capital contribution from the Corporation of the City of Kingston.

In March 2001, the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Committee finalized the Museum's Business Plan which outlined the concept of the Museum as a multi-purpose destination. Further discussion resulted in the development of an on-site refreshment and food services which would enhance the Museum's existing services and increase revenues.

The Museum Committee developed a Business Case for the addition of the Tea Terrace to the Museum and on April 11, 2002 adopted the proposal by resolution. On November 26, 2002 the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Committee presented this Business Case to members of Council during Committee of the Whole. Subsequently, the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Committee has revised the business case thus omitting their original request for a capital financial contribution from the City.

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

A Success Story
The MacLachlan Woodworking Museum has operated successfully in the City of Kingston since 1967 with the emphasis on Collections, Collections Management, Research, Exhibition and Programming. It holds the most extensive public collection in the world of Canadian-made woodworking planes as well as other woodworking tools and wooden artifacts. In 1983 the Museum was purchased by the former Corporation of the Township of Pittsburgh and moved to an attractive rural setting 16 kilometers east of downtown Kingston on Highway #2 at Grass Creek Park.

In 1998, the Museum became a responsibility of the Department of Community Services and it is currently operated under the Cultural Services Division.

Over the past 20 years the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum has increased revenues through admission fees, special events, interest workshops, school group programs, gift shop purchases and maintained a consistent level of subsidy from the municipal budget.

Visitation rates and community involvement have continually increased. In 2000 attendance was up to 4,696 with 50 tours and attendance revenues were $8,700; in 2001 attendance rose to 5,634, tours were up to 70 and attendance revenues increased to $11,500. Increases continued in 2002 with attendance rising to 6,521, tours increasing to 91 and attendance revenues reaching $16,000.

Tourism, education and recreation play a significant role in the economy of the City of Kingston with over 3.1 million tourists per year spending over $250 million. The Museum wants to further tap into this tourism market by enhancing existing services and providing visitors with a multi-purpose destination which will increase their length of stay.
Tea Terrace Business Case
The Museum Committee, with the assistance of City staff, developed a business case for the addition of the Tea Terrace to the Museum (See Appendix A). A copy of the business case was provided to members of Council along with a presentation by the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Committee at the November 26, 2002 Committee of the Whole meeting. A revision has since been made to the business case omitting an initial request for a capital contribution from the City.

The business case addresses the need to increase visitorship to the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum and make it a more attractive destination by expanding the activities and amenities available to visitors. The Museum Committee has assessed the various methods and means by which other museums have achieved this objective and identified the on-site availability of light lunches and beverages, or some level of food service as one of the most effective initiatives.

An outdoor tea room provides the opportunity to attract new clientele who may otherwise not stop at the Museum, to extend the stay and increase spending of current visitors and expand our current services by providing lunch/food options to groups. Given the size, location, and configuration of the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum an outdoor tea room appears to be the type of attraction that would fulfill the Museum’s goals. An example of how this type of facility can enhance a museum’s viability is the McFarland House, a rural museum near Niagara-on-the-Lake, where a 400% increase in visitation was recorded in the 6 years following the opening of their tea room.

The Tea Terrace proposal includes the construction of a wooden deck to accommodate up to 30 people between the rear of the log house and the exhibit building, as well as a small kitchen facility attached to the exhibit building. The food served would include tea, coffee, pastries and sandwiches. Additionally, the kitchen could be used for catering to receptions and other functions held in the exhibit building. The operation of the tea room would include seasonal staff assisted by volunteers.

One of the assets of an outdoor tea room at this location would be the attractiveness of its natural waterfront location and proximity to Grass Creek Park. The facility would not only serve the Museum itself, but would attract visitors from Grass Creek Park, cyclists, local residents, travelers using highway 2 and boaters off the St. Lawrence.

Funding for this project would take the form of both grant and public fundraising ventures. The fundraising strategy will include investigating the establishment of a Friends Society to undertake the public fundraising for this and future Museum projects. Staff will continue to take on the responsibility for submitting grant applications.

Community Support
The MacLachlan Woodworking Museum’s Tea Terrace initiative has already received support from a variety of sources. Anthony Barlow, Architect and MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Committee Member, has prepared preliminary drawings on a volunteer basis. Museum volunteers have indicated an interest in assisting in the operation of the Tea Terrace and local businesses have offered to donate some of the furnishings and consulting services.
To date, in-kind contributions for the Tea Terrace total over 200 committee hours and professional services valued at over $8,000.

EXISTING POLICY/BY-LAW:
There are no existing Policies/By-laws concerning this subject, on record, to date.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN:
The Strategic Plan has identified Culture, Recreation, Parks and Heritage as one of the seven key priority areas in the City of Kingston. Through this project, the City can provide greater exposure to its cultural assets, drawing residents and visitors to the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum and Grass Creek Park.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:
The estimated cost to construct and furnish the proposed Tea Terrace is $63,000. To date, in-kind contributions for the Tea Terrace total over 200 committee hours and professional services valued at over $8,000.

The costs to operate the Terrace will be modest. Seasonal staffing and volunteers would be utilized for the Tea Terrace operation.

Staff and the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Committee have proposed a fundraising strategy which includes grants, donated professional services and the establishment of a Friends Society to pursue public fundraising.

Construction of the terrace would not begin until the full cost of the project are raised.

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DEPARTMENTS/OTHERS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:
John K. Allen, Traffic Analyst, Engineering Services
Don Kiell, Assistant Leader, Cultural Services Division
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Anthony Barlow, MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Committee member
Robert Cardwell, MacLachlan Woodworking Museum Committee member
Anne Marie Harbec, Manager, Visitor Services, Tourism Information Office
Cathy Powell, McFarland House Tea Garden, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario
Kim Reid, Executive Director, Prairie Crocus Tea Room (Costume Museum of Canada), Manitoba
Kevin Kitchen, Heritage Consultant, City of Ottawa

NOTICE PROVISIONS:N/A
APPENDICES:
Appendix A: Tea Terrace Business Case

Lance Thurston
Commissioner, Department of Community Services

Bert Meunier
Chief Administrative Officer