

REQUEST FOR DECISION

SUBJECT:

Mariners Centre Expansion

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Town of Yarmouth Support the formation of an intermunicipal steering committee for the purpose of moving forward with an expansion to Mariners Centre with the following initial mandates:

In anticipation of an impending intake of applications under the Federal/Provincial infrastructure programs, prepare an application for Federal and Provincial funding prior to June 30, 2019, conditional the following deliverables being completed under the direction of the intermunicipal steering committee:

- a) An operational agreement be struck with partners including, but not limited to the Municipalities of the District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of the District of Argyle
- b) A capital and ownership agreement be struck with partners including, but not limited to the Municipalities of the District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of the District of Argyle
- c) That the municipal funding of operations, and capital contributions between municipal partners be based on a formula which includes variables including, but not limited to population and uniform assessment.

The vision and mandate work, as suggested in the dMA consulting reports, which has begun by the municipal leadership of the Municipalities of the District of Yarmouth and the Municipality of the District of Argyle and the Town of Yarmouth be completed prior to October 1, 2019

That a comprehensive engagement and critical review of the elements of the expansion identified in the dMA consulting reports be undertaken to inform the expansion program.

CAO Comments:

The addition of new recreation facilities at Mariners Centre has been one of the top regional priorities for a few years. Executing priorities that require funding from all levels of government requires the alignment of priority projects with policy priorities of higher levels of government and the availability of programs through which to make application.

The most recent example of this sort of opportunity was the successful application for Phase 1 redevelopment funding for the Yarmouth Ferry Terminal, which was also identified as a regional priority.

A new program opportunity has become available at the federal and provincial level, giving rise to a unique opportunity to attract funding for a major project of the nature of the Mariners Centre expansion. An intake in the program is expected this year.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Town sets its own priorities, and we participate in regional priority

setting, Council is being asked to consider this opportunity "out of sequence", because alignment of program opportunities is not always in the order, or sequence, that exactly matches our preferred order.

There may be an opportunity to engage other communities in this project, broadening the base of support and reducing the financial burden.

A comprehensive engagement and critical review of the elements of the expansion identified in the dMA consulting reports has not be undertaken to inform the expansion program. It is recommended that this work, as recommended by the consultant, and previously discussed by municipal partners be undertaken.

REPORT/DOCUMENT dMA consulting documents

DETAILS

Key Concept/Issue Defined

The Town and our municipal neighbours identified a mariners center expansion as our #3 regional priorities in 2016. The #1 priority has not aligned with federal and provincial funding opportunities. The #2 Priority (Ferry terminal) has attracted federal and provincial funding of \$6Million and work is now underway to get the project moving.

A new opportunity will become available to apply for funding through a federal/provincial infrastructure program, and we ought to make a regional application. Much work is left to be done on this project since the feasibility study was completed. It is recommended that this work continue and be completed over the next 6 months. This will require additional funding, but is critical to success in the long-term.

Relevant Policies, By-laws and Legislation:

Strategic Relevance:

The project is a regional priority for several reasons. We have aging indoor recreation infrastructure in our community that is past due for replacement and no longer meets competitive standards or community expectations. Our area has experienced a trend in population decline. Attracting new working-age people to our region will require having modern amenities comparable to other regions for them and their families.

Desired Outcomes:

Approval of recommendations

Response Options:

- a)Approval
- b)Reject
- c)Refer back to staff with direction for more information

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION

General:

Town Council had previously set “placeholders” in our capital budget for Mariners Centre expansion and an aquatic centre. Using the dMA study as a guide for the application, we should expect to apply for a \$35 Million project. The local share of the project would be between \$9.5Million and \$11.7Million. We have proposed a cost sharing formula among the municipal partners using population and uniform assessment, which would make the Town taxpayers share of the project between \$2.5Million to \$3Million.

Put differently \$1.00 - \$1.20 per day, for one year, for every resident.

Organizational:

The conditions outlined above are important to a long-term successful project. A steering committee would have to be struck very quickly, and the work begun with a budget for a project manager and technical consultants/facilitators.

Financial:

The work of preparing the application and completing the upfront work will require a budget. Once an application is approved, expenses will become part of the project budget. Preparatory costs would need to be borne by the municipal partners.

The capital funding could be

- borrowed by Mariners centre and repaid by the municipal partners,
- borrowed by the municipal partners, directly,
- funded from reserves,
- funded through taxes or
- any combination.

Gas Tax would not apply, as it is not stackable with other federal funding.

The Town had made a provision in our capital planning for \$2,525,000 for the associated projects.

All of the noted funding options are feasible for the Town, and all could be accomplished over a number of years, ranging from perhaps 4-20 years. The use of any of these options would not eliminate the possibility of funding other capital needs using the same mechanisms, with the exception of using reserve funds.

Follow-Up Actions:

If Council agrees, we will need to confirm participation of our municipal neighbours, and strike an intermunicipal agreement to undertake the work necessary and make the financial commitments to move the project forward.

Communication:

There are many stakeholders in this project, and expectations will need to be managed. There is an opportunity for funding, not a guarantee.

Other Comments

It should be understood that proceeding with this project now, on top of the Ferry Terminal project and the Town's continuing infrastructure renewal program will exhaust our political and management capacity to execute major capital projects until one of the major projects is complete.

To be clear, it would require considering striking a pause in the Arts and Culture centre project process.

Submitted by: CAO