

FORMAL REPORT

To:	Mayor Stratthdee and Members of Council
Prepared by:	Brent Kittmer, CAO/Clerk
Date of Meeting:	15 May 2018
Subject:	CAO 16-2018 Farmers' Market Request for Construction of a Washroom and Storage Facility

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present Council with a request from the St. Marys Farmers' Market Association to construct a permanent washroom facility at the Jones Street East Parking lot. Council is asked to consider if the Town will permit such a construction; if the Town will contribute to the capital costs of the project; if the Town will support the Association in grant applications, and if the Town will assume long term maintenance of the facility.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT CAO 16-2018 regarding the request from the St. Marys Farmers' Market Association for a permanent washroom / storage facility be received for discussion.

BACKGROUND

The St. Marys Farmers' Market operates out of the Jones Street East municipal parking lot from the Victoria Day long weekend through to Halloween. Late in 2017 the CAO was approached by Ms. Ann Slater, Chair of the Farmers' Market Association, in regards to a proposal to construct a washroom and storage facility at the Jones Street East lot. During the meeting the CAO learned that the Farmer's Market has appreciated the Town's investment in a portable washroom at this location, but is now seeking a more permanent solution. A permanent washroom facility would ensure access to water and washing facilities for the market to better meet public health requirements. A permanent washroom facility would also have the opportunity to provide additional storage space for the market.

From the meeting the CAO agreed to provide some assistance in developing a proposed budget for the construction of the washroom / storage facility. The concept for the building is to be 10 feet by 20 feet, and it will need to be serviced by municipal water and sanitary. The building would consist of a 10 foot by 10 foot washroom space, a 10 foot by 10 foot storage space, with external hose bibs for water access. Staff have considered the costs of servicing and the cost of construction for this building concept and have arrived at a price range of \$105,000 - \$120,000.

Attached to this report is a letter of request from the St. Marys Farmers' Market Association asking the following questions of Council:

1. If Council is willing to have a permanent building erected within the Jones St. East Parking Lot;
2. If Council is willing to allocate some resources, in-kind and cash, towards this project and if so, to what level;
3. If Council is willing to support the Market in any grant applications it may make to foundations or other potential donors, including acting as "Qualified Donee" on behalf of the Market, as required;

4. If such a building is erected, is the Town able to provide ongoing, routine maintenance of the washroom.

REPORT

Council has previously supported a request from the Farmers' Market to fund an accessible portable washroom at the Jones Street Parking lot. The total annual cost for this is \$1,085, which will continue into 2018. This support was provided because the portable washroom is available for use by the general public on days when the market is not in operation. This was viewed as a way to support the Strategic Plan's call for improved access to public washroom's in the downtown core.

The request for a permanent washroom facility is a more substantial request. The purpose of this report is to facilitate a discussion by Council to answer the questions from the Association above.

To assist Council in their consideration of the request there are a number of applicable tactics outlined in the Town's strategic plan. A number of these have been outlined by the Farmers' Market in their letter to Council as they relate the Farmers' Market and its role in making St. Marys an attractive community to visit and live in.

The following strategic priorities and tactics have been identified by staff and may help Council consider this request:

Pillar #1 – Infrastructure

- Priority – Developing a comprehensive and progressive infrastructure plan
 - When developing the annual capital plan have regard for the infrastructure needs identified in the asset management plan before considering new builds or renovations that represent significant service level improvements.

Pillar #4 Culture and Recreation, Pillar #5 Economic Development

- Priority – Downtown Revitalization Plan
 - Investigate the opportunity for new or improved access to public washrooms in the core.
- Priority – Year Round Farmers and Artisans Market
 - Assess the infrastructure needs of creating a year-round, covered Farmers Market facility.
 - Strike a sub-committee of Council and experts to appoint members of a Farmers Market Board.
 - When venue selected, cost out all facility needs (electricity, maintenance, etc.).
 - Establish a reasonable vendor fee.
 - Actively market and promote in tourism literature.
 - Actively grow the market, design it for local residents (retention) and as an attraction (tourism).

Given the competing interests of the Strategic Plan, it is difficult for staff to make a clear recommendation to Council in regards to request. On one hand, the "Infrastructure" pillar of Council's strategic plan would not support this request because it represents the construction of new infrastructure and a service level increase that is not supported by the Town's Asset Management Plan. In addition, any new construction comes with annual maintenance costs, and an increased contribution to the capital reserve to fund lifecycle replacement costs.

On the other hand, the "Culture and Recreation" and "Economic Development" pillars do provide support to this request. Through the Strategic Plan Council has determined it wishes to position culture as a vital economic driver, and focus on downtown revitalization. A centrally located Farmer's Market

certainly contributes to the cultural experience of the downtown core, and is an attractive amenity for residents and visitors.

Additionally, the Strategic Plan guides the Town to make investments for new or improved access to washroom facilities in the downtown. The proposed washroom at the Jones Street East parking lot supports this tactic.

In staff's view there are two key questions for Council to consider when deliberating the request:

- Is construction of a new washroom facility in the downtown core an immediate priority of the Strategic Plan?
- Is the Jones Street parking lot the best / preferred location for this investment in additional washrooms?

If Council decides that investment in new washrooms in the core is an immediate priority, and that the Jones Street East parking lot is the preferred location two possible options to consider are:

1. **Approve the request, and support with cash and in-kind** – in this option Council would be approving the construction and would be supporting the project directly in the form of a cash contribution. The Town would also support the request by providing in-kind services like tendering, construction administration, as well as grant funding application support.

To move this option forward Council would have to approve the project, and determine the capital contribution the Town is willing to make. The project would not proceed until the unfunded balance of the project is raised by the Farmers' Market.

2. **Approve the request, support with in-kind services, no cash support** – in this option Council would be approving the construction, but would not be putting any capital funding towards the project. As in Option #1, the Town could still support the request by providing in-kind services like tendering, construction administration, as well as grant funding application support.

The project would not proceed until the full cost of the project is raised by the Farmers' Market.

If Council decides that new public washrooms in the core are an immediate priority, but that Jones Street East Lot is not the preferred location a possible option to consider is:

3. **Defer the request to 2019 budget consideration, operate as status quo in 2018** – Council could defer the request to the 2019 budget deliberation. This course of action would allow Council to review the request to contribute capital funds to this project against the need for capital spending already identified in the Town's asset management plan.

This course of action would also allow staff the time to review the downtown for other possible areas to create new or improved access to public washroom facilities. As a part of this review, the Farmers' Market Association would be engaged to determine their interest in operating from any of the possible locations that are identified.

If Council decides that new public washrooms in the core are not an immediate priority, possible options to consider are:

4. **Deny the request, offer a new location for the market where washroom facilities already exist** – in this option Council would be deciding against approving a permanent washroom facility at the Jones Street East parking lot. Council could offer to allow the Market to relocate at another Town property where permanent washrooms and storage facilities exist. Within the downtown core, Milt Dunnell field is one option which has a permanent washroom and storage. On the downtown fringe, the revitalized Cadzow Park will have a newly constructed washroom, pavilion, and expanded parking lot that could also be a suitable location. Outside of the downtown core, the Kinsmen Pavilion at the PRC is another location with a washroom and storage facilities.

If this option were to be pursued a discussion would need to be had with the Association to determine what could be suitable locations for them. Council would also need to determine what the Town feels is a suitable location, with proximity to the downtown core being a key consideration.

So that Council is aware, the Farmers' Market Association did broach the topic of relocating the market in the fall of 2016. This discussion was viewed as divisive within the Association. It is important to the Association that the market have a permanent location so that patrons know where and when to attend the market. During the relocation discussion there were concerns about booking conflicts with existing events and functions if a new location was chosen, and how these conflicts might be resolved. Walkability to the market for patrons and being located in the downtown were another key concern of relocating. The disposition of the discussion was that the Board of the Association passed a resolution to stay at the Jones Street East location with a goal to determine how the existing location could be updated.

5. **Deny the request, operate as status quo** – Council has the option of denying the request and asking that the Association continue with the market per the status quo. In this option the market would remain at the Jones Street parking lot, and the Town would continue to provide an accessible portable washroom for the market.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to facilitate a discussion by Council in regards to the request from the Farmers' Market Association for the construction of a permanent washroom/storage facility at the Jones Street East Parking lot.

Given the competing interests of the Strategic Plan, it is difficult for staff to make a clear recommendation to Council in regards to this request. As noted above, to move this request forward Council will need to determine if constructing new washroom facilities in the downtown are an immediate strategic priority, and if the Jones Street parking lot is the preferred location for this investment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed building concept for a permanent washroom is forecasted to cost \$105,000 - \$120,000 if located at the Jones Street East parking lot.

STRATEGIC PLAN

☒ Applicable to this report, and as outlined above.

OTHERS CONSULTED

ATTACHMENTS

1. Letter of Request received from the St. Marys Farmers' Market Association.

REVIEWED BY

Recommended by the CAO



Brent Kittmer
CAO / Clerk