

## The Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Information Report to Council

**SUBJECT:** Revising the Niagara-on-the-Lake Heritage Grant Program Updates  
(File No. HER-46-2023)

**DATE:** 2024-02-07

**REPORT #:** CDS-24-024

**PREPARED BY:** Sumra Zia, Heritage Planner II

**DEPARTMENT:** Community & Development Services

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### RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

- 1.1 Municipal Heritage Committee (MHC) endorses the revised Heritage Restoration and Improvement Grant Program and implementing documents prepared by Town Staff, as included in **Appendix II, III and IV**;
- 1.2 The implementing by-law, as included in **Appendix I**, be endorsed by the MHC and forwarded to Council for approval; and
- 1.3 The one application fee of \$210 for the Heritage Restoration and Improvement Grant for all eligible properties be endorsed by the MHC and forwarded to Council for approval.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Town Staff presented Information Report - Revising the Niagara-on-the-Lake Heritage Grant Program (CDS-23-255 - **Appendix V**) at the December 2023 MHC meeting. The Town's Heritage Grant Program provides financial incentive to owners of commercial, and residential and institutional zoned properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Report CDS-23-255 provided information on the Town's current Heritage Grant Program and outlined that the Town will no longer receive matching funding from the Niagara Region as it has cancelled its Heritage Restoration and Improvement Grant SNIP program. It also recommended that the Town revise and update the Town's Heritage Grant Program in its entirety with specific consideration for how much funding should be provided to heritage designated properties and made suggestions for updates to the by-law, program parameters, and associated documents, for consideration.

MHC supported the review of the Heritage Grant Program and received the report. MHC provided following recommendations to be included in the review:

- Council approves the request for \$60,000 to be put into the budget for 2024 for heritage grants.
- Staff advise Council on how to create a reserve for any excess Grant Funds at the end of any budget year.
- Review the qualifications of a commercial application and a residential application to \$7,500 as the limit for the grant.
- The application fee be one set fee for both residential and commercial applications.
- Working with staff and prior to the issuing of grant funds a Municipal Heritage Committee Member will visit the site to make sure that the work is done properly.
- If all the allocated/budgeted grant funding available in any year is utilized before year end, then any subsequent applications in that year shall be automatically placed on the head of the list for consideration in the following year.

Staff have now undertaken a review of the Heritage Grant Program and have updated the program in light of the considerations within Report CDS-23-255, as well as the recommendations put forward by MHC. The following documents have been updated as part of a complete revision to the program:

1. Heritage Grant Program Implementing By-law (**Appendix I**) – additions or changes to the By-law have been highlighted in yellow.
2. Heritage Restoration and Improvement Grant Program Parameters (**Appendix II**)
3. Revised Heritage Permit and Heritage Grant Application Form (**Appendix III**)
4. Heritage Grant Agreement (**Appendix IV**)

Working documents for the Heritage Grant Agreement and Heritage Permit and Heritage Grant Application have been provided to MHC to demonstrate where the changes are proposed. Once approved, Staff will prepare clean versions for distribution.

Further, the recommendation to increase the Heritage Grant Program budget was put forward in Council's 2024 budget deliberations and was approved at \$60,000.

In response to MHC's recommendation for one application fee to be set for both residential and commercial applications, staff have reviewed and considered the proposal. Through this review, it was determined that the amount of work to review a residential grant application is very similar to the amount of work for a commercial application (i.e. along Queen Street). The majority of the applications received since the program was created have been for improvements to designated residential properties. Staff are supportive of the MHC's direction and have included a recommendation for a set fee of \$210 for the heritage grant application. This reflects the current fee for residential and institutional properties.

## **NEXT STEP / CONCLUSION**

The recommendations of the Municipal Heritage Committee will go to Council for consideration within the Committee Minutes.

Once endorsed, Staff will work with the Communications Team to create informative and engaging documents about the program, conduct social media outreach, and prepare an information package to effectively communicate the program goals and benefits to our community.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- **Appendix I** – Heritage Grant Program Implementing By-law
- **Appendix II** – Heritage Grant Program Parameters
- **Appendix III** – Heritage Grant Application Form
- **Appendix IV** – Heritage Grant Agreement
- **Appendix V** – Revising the Niagara-on-the-Lake Heritage Grant Program – CDS-23-255