



## THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Stephen Peacock, P.Eng  
CAO

SUBJECT: Tannery Property

DATE: February 5, 2015

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### **BACKGROUND:**

This memo is written in regard to recommendations for moving forward with Town property at 96 Alice St, commonly known as the Tannery Property. A brief history of Town involvement with this site will serve to provide context for staff recommendations.

After originally being used for railway equipment production the site was repurposed for tanning with production continuing into the 90's. The site was then closed and fell into disrepair. At the same time, the owner of the property fell behind in tax payments. Further charges on taxes occurred when the town was required to secure the site and remove derelict buildings. A tax sale occurred in late 2009 and failed. During the subsequent year the town was able to gain access to the site to carry out environmental testing. A Phase II Environmental Assessment was carried out with low levels of Chloroethylenes contaminants found in the south-east corner of the site. This would be consistent with the historical use of the site as these substances are used as degreasers and cleaning agents in the tanning process. Due to the presence of these substances, the Town did not take possession of the site at that time.

In the spring of 2012 Council again directed the tax sale of the property for the purposes of recovering taxes owing. On August 8, 2012 the tax sale failed and a 2 year window began that allowed the Town to carry out testing on the site and, if appropriate, take title of the property. Genivar Engineering was contracted to carry out further testing both on and off site to assess contamination levels and migration of contaminants. Along with this work an outreach program was carried out with neighboring property owners to provide data of offsite effects of the Tannery site. A public meeting was held in early Feb 13 to outline the investigations to be carried out and a further public meeting in April outlined the results and what the results meant to the community. In the spring of 2014 Council authorized retesting of the existing wells by WSP (formally Genivar engineering). The results of

sampling indicated the presence of Tetrachloroethylenes, trichloroethylenes and dichloroethylenes in the groundwater in the sample wells located on the site and at Roe and Alice Streets. The report concludes that contamination appears to be relatively stable or decreasing in relation to previous testing. One location, BH10-3, shows a slight elevation of dichloroethylenes not previously noted. Chloroform was not noted in any samples taken. Interpretation of these results indicate that the contamination on the site is stable and slowly dissipating.

Based on the information received by Council a Notice of Vesting was filed by the Town who became the owners of the property in late July 2014.

Since taking the property, the Town issued a RFP for the purpose of selling the land for development in keeping with the Tannery District Community Improvement Plan and Design Charrette. Unfortunately, no responses were forthcoming to the RFP call.

Council received a memo in August of 2014 indicating the failure of the land sale and directed staff to provide a memo with recommended steps to the new Council in early 2015. This report is in fulfillment of that direct.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The Tannery property process has been characterized by public and open dialogue. All test results have been provided to the neighborhood and the larger community. Future community concepts were thoroughly reviewed and put forward by the community through the Tannery District Improvement Plan and Design Charrette Process. It is suggested that this process has worked well and will be integral to a successful renewal of the property. With this in mind two recommendations are provided:

##### Recommendation#1

Due to the existing condition of the site it is crucial that testing continue on an annual basis with this information and its interpretation provided to the neighbourhood and the greater community. This process will provide trends with regard to contamination and peace of mind to the neighbourhood. It is recommended that the Town engage WSP to monitor and provide analysis in a spring 2014 sampling program. Cost of this work is estimated at \$3950.00 plus HST.

##### Recommendation #2

At the time of the RFP, staff received a lot of public input with regard to the use of these lands. I also understand that suggestions were received by many candidates during last Fall's municipal election. More recently, The Tannery District Citizens Group has proposed a sustainable neighborhood development recommendation for the Tannery District. In

discussions with planning, it is suggested that a secondary planning would provide Council and the public with the appropriate public venue to have ideas heard and decisions made on the future direction for the site. Cost of this work is estimated at \$80,000. The Green Municipal Fund (GMF) is a federal fund administered by Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) that will provide up to 50% of funds used for secondary plans that are looking at sustainable communities. It is recommended that this fund be accessed for 50% or \$40,000 of the cost of this work.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Based on the above discussion staff is recommending that:

1. The Town engage WSP to monitor and provide analysis on a spring 2015 sampling program. Cost of this work is estimated at \$3950.00 plus HST.
2. The preparation of a tannery district secondary planning be approved in principle for the site and greater tannery district area. Cost of this work is estimated at \$80,000 and to be included in 2015 budget deliberations. The Green Municipal Fund (GMF) will provide up to 50% of funds used for secondary plans that are looking at sustainable communities.



Stephen Peacock, P.Eng  
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Corporation of the Town of Cobourg