

Report to Council

Report Title:	Cargill and Greenock Swamp Promotion/Visitor Information Centre Budget Update		
Prepared By:	Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator and Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer		
Department:	Economic Development		
Date:	February 9, 2021		
Report Number:	ED2021-01	File Number:	C11ED, F05, L04
Attachments:	Cargill Association Letter to Council – January 2021		

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby accepts Report Number ED2021-01 – Cargill and Greenock Swamp Promotion/Visitor Information Centre Budget Update, prepared by Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator and Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer and in doing so supports a donation for inclusion in the 2021 Municipal Budget to support the Cargill/Greenock Swamp Promotional Association in the amount of \$6,850 plus an additional \$5727.50 to support one summer student should the Canada Summer Jobs grant application be unsuccessful; and further if the grant application is approved the \$5727.50 will be transferred to a reserve fund for consideration by Council to support the Visitor Centre Operations of the Cargill/Greenock Swamp Promotional Association in 2022.

Report:

Background:

Staff have been working with the Cargill/Greenock Swamp Promotional Association (the “Association” or the “Cargill Association”) on 2021 plans since last fall. Following the recent budget meetings in January we have had further discussions and have clarified the Association’s direction and the municipal support required for it to carry out the plans for the 2021 summer season. We have also included a letter received from the Association related to its requests for support in 2021 to meet their goals and objectives. Since this letter was received we have also indicated that the Association will be taking on and overseeing operations of the Visitor information Center. With this in mind and based on the discussions with the members we have attempted to provide a balanced yet supportive approach to ensuring the continued success of this group and this venture in 2021.

Staff propose that the Municipality continue to support the Association with staff resources in the same manner as previous years. Rather than take on the operation of the Visitor Information Centre as an additional municipal service that will stretch our staff capacity we propose to support the Association to run the Visitor

Centre and summer programs in Cargill while offering a financial contribution to enable the group to do so for the betterment of Brockton.

The Cargill Association will run the Visitor Centre, taking over operations from the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority, and will also run the replica “dinky train” (if COVID-19 restrictions are lifted) and Margaret’s Mercantile. The group has expressed interest in managing the swamp tours as well, although it is unlikely they will be offered in 2021 due to COVID-19.

The Cargill Association became incorporated as a not-for-profit in November, 2020, and is eligible to apply for a 100% grant subsidy for summer staff at the Visitor Centre. They have applied to the Canada Summer Jobs program with staff assistance earlier this week. They will have oversight and management of up to two (2) students. Through additional conversations we have revised our direction proposed to the EDC and included in the draft budget to now subsidize the Cargill Association rather than lead the Visitor Information Centre to alleviate challenges with multiple partners, insurance, staffing, rental agreements etc. related to this venture. The staff support and items provided in the past to support this group are recommended to continue.

The Municipality will offer staff resources primarily through the Community Development Coordinator, who will remain the key liaison between the group and the Municipality. The Community Development Coordinator will also oversee promotion of the Cargill activities through the visitwalkerton.com website, social media platforms, print advertising and leveraging grant programs with Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) for these promotions. Brockton and Cargill promotions will focus on attracting both visitors and potential residents looking to relocate to the region. Advertising and promotional expenses will remain in the proposed VIC budget but have been reduced.

The Cargill Association has also requested a new hand-painted sign by Walkerton artist Steve Mackie, to be mounted on a trailer at County Road 3 and Concession 8 (site of the former abattoir) promoting Cargill and the “History Comes Alive” summer activities. The trailer rental is approximately \$250 for the season, while the mural could cost up to \$3,000. We have included \$1,500 to support this request. (The current sign is in poor shape). The group plans to research signage options and funding opportunities for this busy intersection. Should the dinky train not run the group can also re-allocate these funds to signage or additional artwork in the village as requested. Staff also intend to review the Google Maps listing for Cargill, the Visitor Centre, Margaret’s Mercantile, and the Cargill Variety store, to enable people to easily find them through GPS-based services.

While this proposed budget does not include all items outlined in the attached letter we have considered the support of the necessary requests and have included items already supported in previous years for consideration and approval by Council for the 2021 budget.

Proposed Donation for Cargill Association

Required Materials	Cost
Cargill Visitor Centre (laptop, phone, printer, office supplies, PPE, Materials)	\$1,500
Internet	\$200
Summer Staff – 1 Student (10 weeks x \$14.25 + MERC) Potentially offset by Canada Summer Jobs grant at 100% funding	\$5,727.50
Visitor Centre Rental Agreement (4 months x \$500)	\$2,000
Rental of ATV to power “Dinky Train” – If permitted during COVID-19/if not these funds can be re-allocated to the various signage and artwork	\$1,200
New Signage for County Rd 3 and Concession 8, on trailer (seasonal)	\$1,500
Trailer rental (seasonal)	\$250
Bag Tags \$2.00 x 10 weeks	\$200
Total	\$12,577.50
Less: Canada Summer Jobs Grant (pending a successful application)	(\$5,727.50)
Total Proposed Donation to Cargill Association	\$6,850
Plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Support time- attendance at meetings, assisting with endeavors, grants, obtaining information • Flowers • Garbage and Recycling receptacles • Community Development Coordinator support for the creation of advertising and online promotions for visitor and resident attraction 	Task of CDC (time to be tracked) Included in Recreation Budget Available within Municipal inventory Task of CDC- already part of workplans

Analysis:

The initial draft budget proposed to Council included \$25,760 for the Visitor Information Centre and related activities to promote visitation and resident attraction in Brockton. (The full proposed budget was \$38,564, offset by \$10,304 in grants for summer staff and \$2,500 in an RT07 grant)

Based on the items included in the chart above we propose a donation of \$6,850 to the Cargill Association, while maintaining our commitment to provide staffing resources, flowers, garbage and recycling receptacles. We also propose a reduction to \$8400 in the budget for advertising and online promotions for visitor and resident attraction in Brockton which will include Cargill.

Staff recommend that a letter outlining the proposed support be provided to the Cargill Association. This will detail the municipality’s financial commitment and promotional supports and an expectation for tracking visitors, and yearly financial accountability statement for future consideration of on-going financial support.

Sustainability Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Sustainable Strategic Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- Do the recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision? Yes
- Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Cultural Vibrancy? Yes
- Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Prosperity? Yes
- Do the recommendations contribute to Environmental Integrity? Yes
- Do the recommendations contribute to the Social Equity? N/A

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

In total \$12,577.50 will be budgeted for the Cargill Association as a donation. If the Canada Summer Jobs grant is approved the \$5,727.50 included for wages will be transferred to a reserve fund to support next years activities in Cargill.

This proposal results in a total of \$7,282 in savings to the 2021 budget but allows the Cargill Association to continue to manage their own activities in Cargill and alleviates the significant staff time required of the Community Development Coordinator and the Chief Administrative Officer to take over operations, including staff oversight required to operate the Visitor Information Centre in Cargill as a municipal service.

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:



Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer