



SUBJECT: Steam Locomotive and Rail Cars for Freeman Station

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Mayor's Office

Report Number: MO-15-19

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 126-01

Date to Committee: September 9, 2019

Date to Council: September 23, 2019

Recommendation:

Provide Friends of Freeman Station (FOFS) with a grant to maximum amount of \$150,000 to acquire and relocate a vintage steam engine and 2 passenger cars, with the expectation that future fundraising dollars FOFS receives towards this project be applied to fully offset the grant in future; and

Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to write a letter confirming the availability of this funding amount to be included in the FOFS' application package to acquire these items; and

Request FOFS to report back to committee on fundraising and plans on this initiative during the 2020 budget process.

Purpose:

Support the evolution of Freeman Station to contribute to our mandate to create:

An Engaging City

- Community Building through Arts and Culture via Community Activities
-

Background and Discussion:

Friends of Freeman Station (FOFS) has the opportunity to submit a proposal to acquire a vintage steam locomotive and two passenger/baggage cars from the early years of the 20th Century. This equipment is extremely rare, and in relatively good condition, needing only cosmetic restoration. The passenger car is so rare it may well be the only one left of its type in Canada. The locomotive served the Burlington area at one time, the refrigerated baggage car was of a type, and may have been one, that served the Freeman Station fruit platform, and the passenger car was of a type that served Freeman Station as well.

The railway equipment is currently the property of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission (SLPC) and is located at Crysler Park, near Morrisburg, ON. The SLPC has decided the equipment does not fit its mandate as it is too modern for the era they depict at Upper Canada Village, and they do not wish to restore it. They have put it out to tender with the proviso that it must go to a museum, municipality or other similar entity in Canada, for preservation. The equipment will be granted at no cost, except its removal and relocation.

Freeman Station is now virtually complete and is accepting visitors, and school trips. The station is proving to be a popular addition to the public spaces in Burlington. They are now open Saturdays and Public Holidays and have visitor numbers typically between thirty and one hundred, with much larger crowds when they have a special event such as Doors Open. The addition of this rare railway rolling stock will add greatly to the attractiveness of Freeman Station and make it a more significant tourist attraction. It will draw visitors from far and wide and add to the educational experience provided by the station.

FOFS has assembled a team of restoration experts and has the volunteer and sponsor base needed to restore this priceless historic railway equipment and make it, along with the station, a showpiece of which the citizens of Burlington can be proud. They also have the land to accommodate the additions. Having restored Freeman Station and raised almost \$1 million in funds, services and labour to do so, they can demonstrate to SLPC that they are a worthy candidate to receive their valued artifacts. At the present time FOFS has \$30,000 available for restoration work.

The major issue is the cost of moving these large and heavy pieces to Burlington. FOFS has contacted four highly qualified and experienced movers of heavy equipment and asked each for a proposal. Three of the four have been to look at the equipment. All have given FOFS preliminary cost estimates ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000. FOFS is now waiting on formal quotes and will meet with each to negotiate.

To make their proposal to SLPC credible by the deadline of October 4th, FOFS needs to demonstrate that they have the financial capability to move the equipment. To that end

they are requesting support from the City of Burlington. They would be most grateful if that backing could be in the form of a grant that does not require repayment, but if that is not possible, they can look at fundraising to raise the funds to pay the City back. A letter from the City indicating this financial support to move the equipment would form a key element of their proposal and would make it very compelling.

It is their intent to seek other grants and to embark on a fundraising campaign to cover the costs of moving and restoring the equipment.

Conclusion:

By supporting Friends of Freeman Station with this acquisition we will be adding cultural value to a historical asset that the City of Burlington owns and encouraging more local visitors and tourists to explore this site.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

905-335-7607

Appendices:

- A. GTR 1008 engine and tender description
- B. GTR 1008 descriptions
- C. Photo of proposed items

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.