
Subject: Vacant Land at 745 Crescent Road in the Town of Fort Erie

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Report date: Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Recommendations

1. That vacant land owned by Niagara Region and municipally known as 745 Crescent Road, Fort Erie, described as Parts 1 and 2 on Reference Plan 59R-16123, and as shown on the attached Appendix 1 to Report CSD 59-2021 (the "Land") **BE DECLARED** surplus to the needs of Niagara Region;
2. That the transfer of Land to Niagara Regional Housing ("NRH") for the nominal sum of \$1.00 **BE APPROVED**; and
3. That the Commissioner/Treasurer of Corporate Services **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute the necessary documents satisfactory to the Director, Legal and Court Services to facilitate these recommendations.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to declare vacant land owned by the Niagara Region as surplus and to transfer the land to NRH for \$1.00 in order to support a federal application for Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) project stream funding for an affordable housing development.
- The Crescent Road elevated water tank (the "Tank") was previously located upon the Land.
- The Tank was demolished in 2017 and the Land is now vacant.
- The Land is approximately 0.67 acres and located in a residential neighbourhood.
- In 2020, the Town of Fort Erie (the "Town") re-designated the land use to Urban Residential with a rezoning to Residential Multiple 1 (RM1) and to permit an apartment dwelling with a maximum height of three storeys with a minimum lot area of 149 m² per unit.

Financial Considerations

To support Council's Objective 2.3: Addressing Affordable Housing Needs, it is recommended to not dispose of the Land at market value but to transfer the land to NRH for \$1.00 to support a federal application for RHI funding for an affordable housing development.

Analysis

The Land is the former site of the Crescent Road water tower that was demolished in 2017. Water staff determined the land was no longer needed for water purposes. Environmental Site Assessments were undertaken and a Record of Site Condition was filed with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks on September 14, 2018.

In early 2019, Real Estate staff began the process to dispose of the Land in accordance with the Disposal of Land By-law 26-2011 (the "By-law"). Information about the Land being declared surplus was circulated to departments of Niagara Region; agencies, boards, and commissions of Niagara Region; the Town; local school boards; provincial government; and federal government. No responses were received indicating interest in purchasing the Land.

Discussion was held with Planning and Development Services staff from the Town and Niagara Region regarding future use of the Land. The Town's Official Plan designation and zoning at that time severely restricted the development potential. An application for an amendment to the zoning by-law and/or official plan was submitted to the Town in October 2019.

Regional Councillors were notified of this potential surplus land in memorandum CWCD 414-2019 dated November 8, 2019 (attached as Appendix 2 to Report CSD 59-2021).

In early 2020, the Town approved the application for an amendment to the zoning by-law and/or official plan with the land use designation changing to Urban Residential from Institutional along with a change in zoning from Public to Residential Multiple 1 (RM1) with a special provision to allow an apartment dwelling with a maximum height of three storeys with a minimum lot area of 149 m² per unit.

As NRH had expressed no interest in the Land in 2019, Real Estate staff intended to continue with the process to dispose of the Land, but a motion was carried at the

January 15, 2020, Corporate Services Committee “That the property located at 745 Crescent Road, in the Town of Fort Erie, **BE INCLUDED** as part of the inventory in the Niagara Regional Housing Master Plan and that staff not proceed with any action to dispose of the property at this time”. Real Estate staff then discontinued the process to dispose of the Land until NRH completed their Master Plan.

Recently NRH staff contacted Real Estate staff about acquiring the Land for \$1.00 for affordable housing. NRH will be presenting their own report for approval to purchase the Land from Niagara Region.

Alternatives Reviewed

Disposing of the Land on the open market was reviewed, however, the process was stopped following the motion carried at the January 15, 2020, Corporate Services Committee meeting. Additionally, since the real estate market has increased substantially, NRH would be at a disadvantage to find alternative vacant land to support affordable housing.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Objective 2.3: Addressing Affordable Housing Needs.

Other Pertinent Reports

Niagara Regional Housing SPEC-1-2021, September 8, 2021

Prepared by:

Pam Salvatore, SR/WA
Real Estate Coordinator
Corporate Services

Recommended by:

Todd Harrison, CPA, CMA
Commissioner/Treasurer
Corporate Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was reviewed by Frank Fucile, Manager, Real Estate; Donovan D'Ambroise, Manager, Program Financial Support; Gordon Szaszi, Project Manager Housing Development; Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, Donna Gibbs, Director, Legal and Court Services and Sterling Woods, Legal Counsel.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Aerial photo of 745 Crescent Road, Fort Erie
- Appendix 2 CWCD 414-2019