

Council to explore different opportunities at property slated for new Admin Centre

New Tecumseth Council is creating a sub-committee to undertake visioning exercises at the former Alliston Union Public School (25 Albert St. W).

The property was originally acquired by the Town to develop a new \$20 million Administration Centre, but since the municipal election in 2018, half of the new term of Council opposes the development due to its cost.

With the project stuck in limbo, Ward 3 Councillor Paul Foster put forward the unanimously supported motion for a sub-committee at last Monday's meeting,

"I believe personally the 25 Albert Street property should be maintained as Town owned property, but its primary use should not necessarily be an Administration Centre, rather it should be used for outdoor recreational space for existing and future resident use," said Foster.

"While our opinions can vary, and they usually do, hopefully we can all agree that property such as this, in this location has the potential to add significant quality of life to all taxpayers."

Foster noted that administration needs still must be addressed and opportunities for that will be explored as well.

He's providing an in-depth presentation to Council prior to October 19 to fully flesh out his vision for the 25 Albert St. W property.

Ward 8 Councillor Alan Lacey said using the property for a new Administration Centre could be "fraught with disaster" if staff are all working out of one place.

He noted that if there was ever an outbreak there it could shut down a significant portion of the services in Town.

"We've also learned that we can work diversified, from home, from various locations and we're very effectively as a Town and as a group," Lacey remarked.

He said the property is very valuable and should continue to be owned by the Town for the benefit of residents.

"I'd like to thank Councillor Foster for bringing this motion forward to see what we could do as a Council to make the most value out of that for our people," Lacey noted.

Ward 1 Councillor Wayne Noye echoed Lacey's statement.

"It's a very interesting project and I think it will benefit the residents of our Town," he said. "It's worth looking into and I'd love to be a part of the committee if I could."

Meanwhile, Ward 4 Councillor Fran Sainsbury said that it's important to move quickly to improve the Town's administration space.

"To me time is of the essence, we need a Town Office where people can come to do business, have a chair to sit on and a microphone that works, where everyone's in the same room, hearing the same thing at the same time," she noted. "COVID will go away and we're planning for the future."

By Sam Odrowski Local Journalism Initiative Reporter