



P.O. Box 146
Mindemoya, ON POP 150

July 2, 2021

Mayor R. Stephens and Councillors
Municipality of Central Manitoulin
Mindemoya, ON POP 150

Dear Mayor Stephens and Councillors,

FOMOS was disappointed that Council voted to reject Sudbury-based Canada Builder Inc.'s letter of intent to convert the Old School to seniors' housing. I am sending you this open letter on behalf of FOMOS to encourage the Municipality of Central Manitoulin to open a dialogue with Canadian Builder Inc. for the specific purpose of exploring this opportunity. Seniors' housing is indisputably an infrastructure component of which Manitoulin is in dire need.

As several of the Councillors expressed their support for further exploring viable options for the building's future and because of Councillor Scott's remarks after the vote, we - ultimately and happily - concluded that we can feel hopeful about Council's open and positive approach to the Old School. As reported in the Expositor (June 30), Councillor Scott specifically said that declining the letter of intent as submitted should open up a dialogue, and that Council is not closing the door. Therefore, FOMOS now calls on the Municipality to respond by entering into good-faith negotiations, with the aim of arriving at an agreement with Canadian Builder Inc. acceptable to both parties.

Canadian Builder Inc.'s purchase would not only save a solid, well-built, historically-significant landmark but also allow for expansion of available seniors' housing along with a possibility of also allowing for additional, community-oriented facilities, all without significantly contributing to climate change. That's good for seniors, for the community as a whole, for the environment, and for municipal tax revenues.

FOMOS believes that it is important for the public to be aware of the context surrounding Canadian Builder Inc.'s letter of intent. This letter included a provision asking for Central Manitoulin to contribute \$150,000 towards the development cost - a sum not to be paid until conversion is 50% complete. It is worthwhile noting that, because of the long-term advantages for their communities, municipalities throughout Canada regularly offer incentives to

developers. For instance, Temiskaming Shores (formerly New Liskeard/ Haileybury) recently donated the land for a new seniors residence and further incentivized the developer with a tax break.

Additional and highly relevant context, that we would of course be remiss not to point out, is that the current municipal budget already allocated \$150,000 to the demolition of the building. Investing such a sizeable sum to gain revenue-generating infrastructure rather than to destroy a historical, local landmark will, instead of literally throwing it in landfill, make it money exceedingly well-spent!

As a tangible reflection of our deep commitment to this vision for the Old School, the Friends of the Mindemoya Old School hereby pledge up to \$10,000 to help defray survey, environmental testing and other costs associated with the sale of the building to Canadian Builder. In return for this donation, we require only agreement that the building exterior be left largely intact, and that a historical monument or similar structure be permitted on the property.

In closing, because Council intends to vote on the future of the Old School during the month of September, FOMOS must underscore that there is **no time to waste** in moving this dialogue forward. Therefore, we would like to be informed of the mechanism Councillor Scott has in mind for opening discussions with the Canadian Builder, and whether the Mayor has or will instruct municipal staff to initiate this dialogue and, if so, what is the intended process?

We would appreciate an acknowledgement of our pledge, and invite you to approach us with any questions you may have. We look forward to receiving your considered response at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jan McQuay, President, FOMOS

Cc: Canadian Builder, Inc.
Ruth Frawley, CA
The Manitoulin Expositor