
REPORT

3022/19

TO:	The Chair and Members of the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority Policy & Priorities Advisory Committee
FROM:	Shannon Gutoskie, Community Relations Coordinator
RE:	Mill of Kintail Museum Strategy
DATE:	September 5, 2019

Recommendation:

That the Policy & Priorities Committee recommend to the Board of Directors:

1. That staff redraft the Strategy for the Mill of Kintail Museum to transition its focus from Dr. R. Tait McKenzie and Dr. James Naismith to matters more closely aligned to the legislated mandate of the Conservation Authority as presented as Option 4 in this report.
2. That the revised Strategic Plan provide time for the community to consider and pursue other options contained in this report and provide an alternative business case to the Board for consideration.
3. That a letter be sent to county council recommending that Lanark County spearhead a conversation with museum advocates and the community at large regarding the sustainability of community museums and potential opportunities to share or consolidate resources.

1.0 ISSUE

In February 2019, work commenced on a five-year strategic plan for the Mill of Kintail Museum as required by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's Community Museum Operating and Pay Equity Grant. In May, a draft plan was distributed to member municipalities and the general public for feedback. After a 30-day commenting period, only two responses were received.

Subsequently, the Province of Ontario approved Schedule 2 of Bill 108 that tied conservation authority general municipal levies to conservation authority (CA) mandatory programs, which were reduced in scope by the legislation. This is forcing all

CAs to examine current activities and determine whether they will remain eligible for Municipal Levy funding.

In examining the Mill of Kintail Museum, which focuses on the lives, philosophies, and accomplishments of two local residents, it was concluded that the current focus and collection do not meet the core mandate of CAs and will likely no longer qualify for Municipal Levy funding when new regulations take effect, expected sometime in 2021. A Museum Strategy is needed that addresses the direction and financial impacts of these legislative changes.

In 2018, museum operations cost \$269,367. Another \$95,000 in capital improvements are required over the next five to ten years. Table 1 provides a breakdown of current funding sources.

Table 1: 2018 Revenues – Mill of Kintail Museum¹

Revenue Source	Amount	%
Municipal Levy	\$183,101	60
Town of Mississippi Mills	\$11,464	4
Provincial Grant	\$13,445	5
Education Program Fees	\$14,800	13
Entry and Other Fees	\$9,550	4
Other	\$37,009	14
TOTAL	\$269,369	100%

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- Retain and maintain the Mill heritage structure as a tourism attraction in the region.
- Use the building in a manner that aligns with the conservation authority's mandate as defined by legislation.
- Secure sustainable funding for proper maintenance and capital reinvestment in the heritage building, and continued improvements to meet current accessibility standards.

3.0 OPTIONS

The museum structure is in very good condition, has two floors that are wheelchair accessible, modern communications systems, a kitchen, one flush toilet, and is an attractive and highly regarded landmark in the community. Originally built as a grist mill

¹ Refer to Appendix 1: 2018 Mill of Kintail Operating Budget

in 1830, it was converted to a home and studio in 1931, and subsequently into a museum in 1952. In 1981, the Town of Mississippi Mills approved heritage status for the Mill of Kintail (MOK). MVCA took ownership in 1972 and has made significant investments in the structure over the years to keep it in good working condition and compliant with applicable laws. As a valuable community asset worthy of continued use, abandonment is *not* considered an option. This leaves five options:

1. Increase user fees and secure alternative funding to allow the museum to continue at the current level and service and remain focused on Dr. R. Tait McKenzie and Dr. James Naismith.
2. Continue with the current focus, but reduce levels of service at the Museum to align with the new financial model (e.g. shorter season and hours of operation, and limited curation and changes of the displays.)
3. Continue with the current focus, but transfer ownership of the collection and museum operations to a third party, likely a local not-for-profit volunteer organization.
4. Transition the museum collection and focus so that they align with the legislated mandate of CAs (sustainable resource management); and, safely store the McKenzie-Naismith collections until such time as other entities in the community are found to take over the collections.
5. Transition the museum collection and focus so that they align with the mandate of CAs (sustainable resource management); and, transfer the McKenzie-Naismith collections to other museums, galleries, organizations, and collectors.

4.0 ANALYSIS

a) Site Museum Fees

In 2018, entry fees accounted for 4% of museum revenues. Currently there is no additional fee for visitors to enter the museum; rather, they pay upon entry to the site: \$6/vehicle, or \$45/vehicle for an annual pass. Admission to the museum is by donation. Prior to 2003, visitors were required to pay \$2/per person for admission to the museum. This resulted in stagnant visitorship. Only when admission became included with the overall site entry fee did visitorship increase: visitors in 2005: 4,260; visitors in 2015: 8,480. Table 2 compares fees charged for other recreation and leisure activities in Lanark County.

Table 2: Recreation & Leisure Comparisons in Lanark County

Blueberry Mountain	Free
Day pass to area Provincial Park	\$12.25 - \$21.00
Drive-in movie theatre	\$12/pp (adult) \$5/pp (child)
Perth Wildlife Reserve Conservation Area	\$7/vehicle
Pinhey's Point Historic Site	By donation

Fee increases alone will not address the 60% of revenues currently funded via the Municipal Levy.

b) Museums in Lanark County

The Mill of Kintail Museum is one of eleven (11) heritage museums in Lanark County, and one of four (4) located in Mississippi Mills. Table 3 summarizes key information regarding the museums. In 2015, a report was completed for the Town of Mississippi Mills "*Toward Sustainability for Mississippi Mills Museums*" with the following key findings:

- The museums in Mississippi Mills: James Naismith and the R. Tait McKenzie Memorial Museums, Mississippi Valley Textile, and North Lanark Regional Museum share several sustainability challenges including: limited staffing; lower than average staff compensation levels; limited time and resources to develop innovative and participative programming and to manage collections; lack of collection storage space; and financial constraints compounded by lower than average municipal funding.
- The museums need to: 1) be relevant; 2) collaborate and partner up; 3) secure adequate resources; and 4) take individual action in the face of sustainability challenges.
- Recommended actions: 1) Rethink the role of museums and how to engage people; 2) tell a complete story of Mississippi Mills; 3) increase and formalize joint actions and initiatives; 4) improve collections management; 5) created a shared pool of museum staff; 6) establish formal funding agreements; 7) increase municipal funding to museums; 8) develop capital investment plans; and 9) strengthen museum organizations from the inside out.

Table 3: Museums in the County of Lanark, 2018

Museum	Entry Fee	No. of Visitors	Hours Open/Wk	Operating Budget	Largest Funder
Mill of Kintail Museum	\$6/entry	7,500	45hr/wk; 24 wks/yr	\$269k	11 Municipalities of the MVCA ²
Archives Lanark	\$2/pp	250	2 days/wk	\$23k	Grant via Lanark County
Carleton Place	Donation	2,700	36/wk	\$73k	Carleton Place
Matheson House	Donation	10,100	Year round, hours vary	\$200k	Perth
Middleville	\$5/pp	500	12/wk		Lanark Highlands (\$3,000)
North Lanark	Donation	2,000	36/wk	\$70.6k	Mississippi Mills (\$6,000)
Textile Museum	\$7/pp	4,228	36/wk	\$270.6k	Mississippi Mills (\$65,000)

There is an opportunity to move the McKenzie and Naismith collections to one or more of the other museums to address some of the issues identified by the 2015 report. These discussions have not occurred to date.

c) Other Naismith and McKenzie Collections

Dr. R. Tait McKenzie

The art, writings, and other artifacts of Dr. McKenzie can be found at the following museums and galleries as well as in many private collections:

- Tait McKenzie Centre (sports facility at York University in Toronto)
- Recognized at McGill University in Montreal
- University of Tennessee
- Philadelphia Museum of Art

Dr. James Naismith

Artifacts associated with and recognition of Dr. Naismith can be found at the following:

- Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame: Springfield, Massachusetts
- High Plains Museum, Goodland, Kansas
- Kansas Sports Hall of Fame
- Canada's Sports Hall of Fame
- Posthumously inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame (2019)

² Refer to Appendix 2 for details.

While there is a strong desire in the community to retain the McKenzie-Naismith collections, if there is not the capacity to do so there are other organizations that may be interested in the collections.

d) Mill of Kintail Conservation Area and Museum Metrics

The museum is open 45 hours a week during the May to October operating season. For the years 2017-2018 annual attendance averaged 7,000/year. By comparison, more than 4,500 people visited the Museum between May 18 and August 13, likely due to the success of the Raptors Basketball team and associated media coverage of the museum. Over a period of six weeks this summer, museum staff asked a random sample of visitors what brought them to the site and where they were from in order to determine who is visiting the museum and why. Table 4 provides results.

Table 4: Visitor Origin and Intent (July 8 – August 13, 2019)

Origin	No. of Visitors
Eastern Ontario	185
Other Ontario	26
Out of Province	12
USA	14
Other International	11
TOTAL	248
Percentage who attended the MOK specifically to visit the museum	66%

While the MVCA's education and wedding services are not supported in statements issued by some in the provincial government, they have proved very popular and are always fully booked well in advance. There is an opportunity to enhance these programs and services to increase site revenues. It is unlikely, however, that they can address the 60% in revenues currently addressed by the Municipal Levy.

In 2007, MVCA undertook a site analysis of the Mill of Kintail Conservation Area and identified strengths, challenges and opportunities for the site, including the following:

- Quiet and attractive natural setting offering a unique combination of educational, cultural and recreational activities developed around the legacy of an important and interesting historical figure;
- Proximity to large populations;
- Interesting alternative to local park destinations such as Piney Point Park in Dunrobin, Mackenzie King Estate in Gatineau Park, Provincial Parks;
- Chronic under funding of small museums (federal and provincial governments);

- Tenuous relationship between museum operation and the MVCA mandate; and
- R. Tait McKenzie is not a well-known figure and his story challenging to present (compared to Naismith, for example.)

e) Realignment of Museum Focus

The *Conservation Authorities Act* states that the mandate of CA's is to "to provide, in the area over which it has jurisdiction, programs and services designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources." At present, Mill of Kintail Museum operations do not align with that mandate, and the link under the Draft Strategic Plan prepared earlier this year is tenuous.

The Mill of Kintail Conservation Area contains a managed forest and agricultural lands, is bisected by the Indian River, and the Mill structure is an example of early water power generation and commerce in the region. As such, there are ample opportunities to redirect the focus of the museum and integrate it with site operations to tell stories, display artifacts and provide working examples that speak to the history and current state of forestry, agriculture, hunting and fishing, water transportation and water power generation in the Ottawa Valley.

While funding opportunities for the Tait-Naismith museum are limited, there are many private companies, industry and other organizations that could potentially support and partner with MVCA to develop this new focus. For example:

- Eastern Ontario Model Forest to demonstrate forestry best practices;
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture to demonstrate historical and current practices;
- Ducks Unlimited to demonstrate habitat protection for migratory birds;
- Ontario Power Generation to demonstrate small hydro;
- Algonquin College urban forestry program to practice/demonstrate skills; and
- Manufacturers to demonstrate future technologies employed in resource management.

Several of the artifacts within the McKenzie-Naismith collections could be used to tell those stories, and the history of the site itself would continue to be told. Existing staff could be used to plan and implement the transition of the museum; with support from volunteers to help tell the larger story of resource management in the Ottawa Valley. The proposed focus and greater integration with site operations would increase special event opportunities that could attract a broader range of visitors to the site and region.

5.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The McKenzie-Naismith collections are community asset owned and managed by the MVCA. Many in the community see the collections, particularly the R. Tait McKenzie collection, as inextricably tied to the Mill of Kintail property and will strongly object to relocating the collection. Time is needed to allow the community the opportunity to pursue the other options contained in this report and to prepare an alternative business case for consideration by the Board.

Ideally, the community engages in a broader discussion regarding the sustainability of small museums in the region, as all face aging volunteers, limited funding, static collections, and evolving demands of the viewing public. The revised Strategic Plan will allow time for the community to discuss not just the future of the McKenzie-Naismith collections, but also how they could fit into the broader scope of museums in the region. There may be an opportunity for the County of Lanark to coordinate the conversation as, collectively, the 11 museums in Lanark offer tremendous social value to the community.

The duration of the engagement period will depend upon the transition period being imposed on Conservation Authorities under provincial regulations expected to be released in September.

6.0 FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

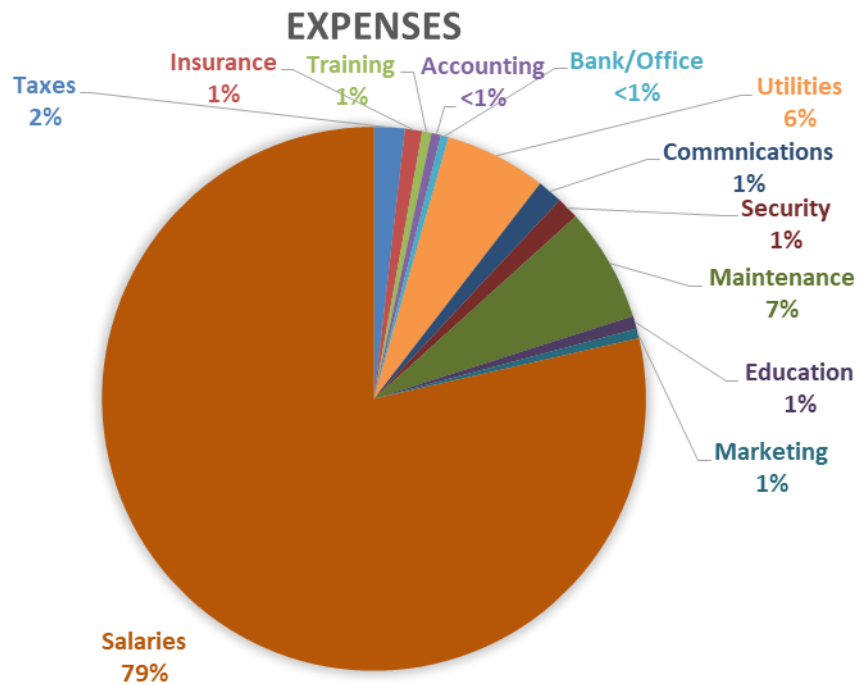
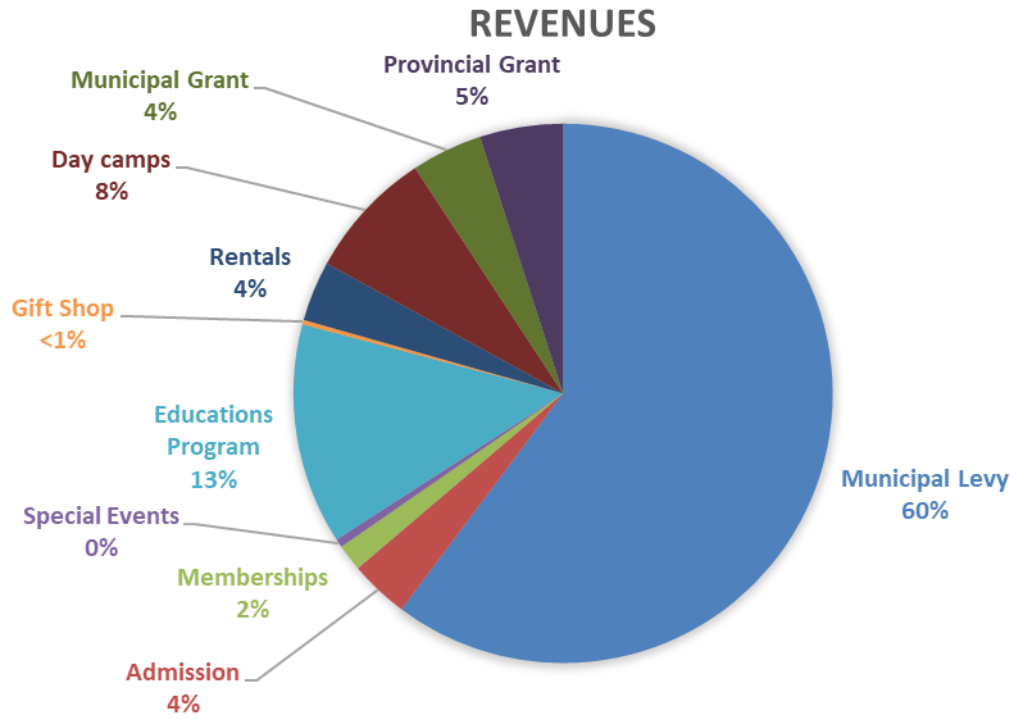
1. The MOK museum is in good condition, is a community heritage structure, is a major draw to the Conservation Area, and a valuable tourism and heritage asset in the region.
2. Museums within the Lanark County Museum Network (LCMN) are competing for limited funds, volunteers, and visitors.
3. Fees for services cannot be raised to a level that will address the 60% in revenues currently funded via the Municipal Levy.
4. While the Mill of Kintail Museum saw an increase in visitorship in 2019 due to the Toronto Raptors NBA final win, that level is unlikely to be sustained given limited funding to promote, advertise and enhance the exhibits.
5. There are limited opportunities to expand and change the existing McKenzie-Naismith collections to appeal to a broader population and encourage repeat visits.
6. A museum focused on sustainable resource management could offer a wider-range of programming that would be of interest to a broader spectrum of visitors, and allow for more events to attract people to the Conservation Area.
7. A museum focused on sustainable resource management would have greater partnership and funding opportunities than the current museum.

8. A museum focused on sustainable resource management should be eligible for Municipal Levy funding under the regulations expected this fall.
9. Other museums, organizations and individuals exist locally and outside the region with interest in the McKenzie-Naismith collections.
10. The community must be engaged to ensure that all options are appropriately explored before transitioning the museum's focus.
11. From a governance perspective, a fully integrated site that is operated and maintained by the MVCA would be most efficient.
12. Transitioning the museum to a new focus mitigates impacts to the community and staff arising from Bill 108.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

If approved by the MVCA Board of Directors in September, staff will revise the museum's Strategic Plan to allow for the proposed consultation and transition periods, and table the updated plan for final approval in October.

Appendix 1: 2018 Mill of Kintail Operating Budget



Appendix 2:

