
REPORT

3127/21

TO:	MVCA Board of Directors
FROM:	Christa Lowry and Jeff Atkinson, Co-Chairs of the Museum Special Advisory Committee
RE:	Museum Special Advisory Committee Recommendations
DATE:	April 14, 2021

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board direct staff to:

- 1. Carry-out a public consultation program for the options set out in this report.**
- 2. Undertake further investigations to assess the viability of the options contained in this report, and report back to the Board with findings and recommendations.**

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with the findings and recommendations of the Mill of Kintail Museum Special Advisory Committee with respect to the future of the McKenzie and Naismith collections at the Mill of Kintail Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

In June 2019, the Province of Ontario approved Schedule 2 of Bill 108 that tied municipal levies to conservation authority (CA) mandatory programs, which were reduced in scope by the legislation. This forced all 36 CAs across the province to examine current activities and determine whether they will remain eligible for municipal levy funding.

Upon examination, it was concluded that the current focus and collection of the Mill of Kintail Museum, which pays homage to the lives, philosophies, and accomplishments of two local residents—Dr. R. Tait McKenzie and Dr. James Naismith, does not meet the core mandate of CAs and will likely no longer qualify for Municipal Levy funding when new regulations take effect, expected in 2021. A special advisory committee was struck, consisting of representatives from the museum, municipal, nonprofit and community organization sectors, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Committee Membership

Representing	Name
Municipality of Mississippi Mills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christa Lowry (Co-Chair)
Town of Carleton Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Atkinson (Co-Chair)
MVCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ross Fergusson • Shannon Gutoskie
Museum Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Robertson • David Morrison
Fundraising Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al Roberts • Carolyn Piche
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jill Moxley • Duncan Abbott (former member)

3.0 WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee met four times between November 2019 and February 2020 to review, comment and advise on options with respect to the future of the Museum. Working on the assumption that the new regulations stemming from Bill 108 will not include museum operations as part of the conservation authority’s core mandate, the committee concluded that the ideal solution would be to find sustainable, long-term funding that will allow the museum to operate independent of the MVCA while continuing to be located at the Mill of Kintail Conservation Area.

The committee’s workplan includes a review of the operational and capital costs associated with the museum, a review of the capacity of other museum operations in the region, and identifying potential sources of support from private funders and both the Provincial and Federal governments (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Heritage Canada).

Due to COVID-19, the committee was on hiatus until reconvening in January 2021. Committee recommendations were finalized at its final meeting held February 26, 2021, as it has now fulfilled its mandate.

4.0 FINANCES

4.1 Revenues

There is no entry fee for the Mill of Kintail Museum. Instead, the parking fee paid at the site entrance provides access to both the conservation area and the museum. Parking revenues are used to support all conservation area operations, not just the museum. The Museum itself has four primary sources of revenues, of which approximately \$28,000 is in annual grants:

- Canadian Museum Operating Grant (CMOG) - \$13,000/year
- Culture Grant from the Municipality of Mississippi Mills - \$11,000/year
- Canada Summer Jobs/ Young Canada Works - \$4,000/year (for 2 students, pre-COVID-19)
- Municipal levy – covers the balance of costs, and varies depending upon capital needs

Other revenues that support overall conservation area operations include user fees and donations, which vary year over year. The following were 2020 revenues:

- On-site parking at the MOK site was ~\$23,500 (above average due to COVID-19);
- MOK site rentals and MVCA Conservation Area Passes totalled ~\$12,000; and
- Cash donations were ~\$5,700.

Museum attendance was less than 1000 in 2020 due to COVID-19, but generally averages 8,000/year.

4.2 Expenditures

The museum incurs four types of costs for a total of approximately \$156,000 per year:

- Operating - Non-compensation – to keep “lights-on” and maintain building integrity ~\$23,000/year.
- Operating - Compensation – one full-time, 1.5 seasonal employees, and other MVCA staff ~\$101,000/year.
- Minor capital – averaged ~\$2,500/year over the past 5 years (incl. refinishing floors, painting, minor renovations.)
- Major capital – averaged ~\$7,800/year over the past 10 years (incl. fire escape, furnaces.)

5.0 OPTIONS

The Committee recommends that the following three options for keeping the museum at the Mill of Kintail Conservation Area undergo public consultation:

OPTION A – Ownership transferred to Other Existing Organization

MVCA seeks a suitable, existing organization to assume ownership and management of the Dr. R. Tait McKenzie and Dr. James Naismith collections, with transitional funding provided by MVCA.

STRENGTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains museum and collections at the MOK
WEAKNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown timeframe to secure an existing organization • Costs associated with legal transfer of the collections
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverages board, governance structure and funding stream of existing suitable organization
THREAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future changes to MVCA may impact new organization and vice versa • Securing suitable agreement between third-party and MVCA for continued operation of the museum at the MOK

Option B – MVCA Retains Ownership

MVCA maintains ownership of the R. Tait McKenzie and Dr. James Naismith collections and obtains operating and maintenance funding via:

- Memoranda of Understanding with local municipalities; and
- The Mississippi Valley Conservation Foundation (MVCF)

STRENGTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains museum and collections at the MOK
WEAKNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires participation/support of up to 11 municipal councils • MVCF is not a strong fundraising organization and is in transition
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MVCA can continue to co-promote the collections with the conservation area
THREAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instability of funding: local municipal tax pressures could see unexpected termination of MOUs. MOUs are only for the length of a term of council.

Option C – New Museum Corporation Created

Ownership and future management of the R. Tait McKenzie and Dr. James Naismith collections would be assumed by a new Museum or other corporation. MVCA would request a 5-year regulatory exemption from the provincial government on the grounds that the collections are of national significance; and in order to secure transitional funding, allow for formation of a new Museum Board, and for the new organization to evolve into an independently funded entity.

STRENGTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains museum and collections at MOK
WEAKNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must establish entire entity: board, governance structure, foundation, funding stream
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase nationally significant figures and collections
THREAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likelihood of provincial exemption unknown • Potential lack of community interest in establishing and participating in a new corporation/board • Securing suitable agreement between third-party and MVCA for continued operation of the museum at the MOK

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Committee Co-chairs recommends that staff consider the above options, undertake further investigations as needed to assess their viability, and report back to the Board in May 2021. And, in the meantime, recommend the following consultation approach:

- Release the Committee's report for public consultation.
- Allow for public review and comment from April 23 to May 7.
- Host a live Zoom event to present the options on April 29.