

The Museums of Mississippi Mills: Their Service and Value To the Community



Summary of Meetings August-September 2023

Prepared for : Municipality of Mississippi Mills

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Museums are at the heart of a just and knowledgeable society. They educate and inspire. They house our culture and history. They create a sense of community and belonging : Canadian Museums Association, 2021 Report

1.0 Introduction

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills in 2023, is undertaking a summary review of community services, and as part of this, the Museums of Mississippi Mills have been asked to provide input into the process.

The Mississippi Mills museums include - North Lanark Regional Museum, Mill of Kintail (James Naismith, R Tait Mackenzie Museums) and the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum.

These wonderful facilities, and the people who dedicate and commit time to caring for their collections, programming special events, and maintaining these historic sites, all combine to tell the unique and rich history of how this municipality evolved from the agricultural and industrial development eras in the early 19th Century onward - on the unsundered, ancestral territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation. This latter story – of indigenous peoples presence along the Mississippi River and its tributaries for several thousands of years – has yet to be told comprehensively.

The following is a brief summary of discussions held at each of these museum sites in the first 2 weeks of August, followed by a meeting of representatives of each Museum at the Old Town Hall, Almonte, on August 24th and in follow-up research and communications in September, 2023

2.0 Purpose of the Municipality's Review of Mississippi Mills Museums Services

The purpose was to identify with the input of Museums staff and volunteers:

- The work, achievements, services and benefits each museum and the collective group of museums provides to the community as a whole, and to visitors to Mississippi Mills
- The Challenges museums face in operations, governance, collections management, staffing/volunteers, promotion, facilities and site maintenance, and conservation
- Potential Opportunities for each museum, the group of museums and the Municipality to explore collaboratively realize, to make the museums sector stronger
- Strategies for long term support to sustain the quality, and programming of the Mississippi Mills Museums
- Potential connections with organizations and comparable programs who can help advise the Municipality and the Museums of Mississippi Mills

3.0 Protocol for this Work

The work was carried out in a spirit of cooperation, professionalism and respect. It followed the basic tenets of the Ontario Museum Association's Code of Conduct which strives to support and advocate for all members of the museum community through a commitment to providing inclusive, respectful, accessible, and safe meeting spaces for learning and collaboration.

4.0 Review Process to Date

This work was conducted during the month of August, 2023. It included:

1. Start-up Meeting with Tiffany McLaren , Municipality of Mississippi Mills
2. Meetings and visit to each site – August 15 – Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, North Lanark Regional Museum. August 21 – Lucy Carleton, Volunteer Collections , Mill of Kintail Collection August 22 – Mill of Kintail, August 24 – Representative of the Museums at Old Town Hall
3. Meeting with City of Ottawa – Museums funding manager Anik Despres
4. Review of Reports to Date including the Sagam Consultants Report and Summary reports submitted by each individual museum
5. Research into Comparables – Ottawa Museum Sustainability Plan, Ottawa Museum Network, Municipalities of Carleton Place and Beckwith, Town of Perth Museum

5.0 Context : What Is The Value of the Museums of Mississippi Mills to the Community ?

In general, there is a feeling among the Mississippi Mills Museums -Board and staff members - that there is more potential to be reached in what they offer to the community. -Not surprisingly – they feel that more resources, particularly funding for staffing – to attain this potential.

This report recognizes that the Museums of Mississippi Mills make an important contribution to the overall quality of living in the community. They are learning and knowledge centres. They add to the sense of stability and sense of belonging both for long-term residents and for people new to the community. .

There are universally accepted social, cultural and economic values attributed to museums and their benefits to the community.

These are well substantiated.

In 2019, a major study of Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums (GLAMS) by the **Ottawa Declaration Working Group** sponsored by **Canadian Museums Association** and conducted by a team from Oxford Economics - Oxford University provided an assessment of the economic value of galleries, libraries, archives and museums to Canada, and communities.

This study took a **Total Economic Value (TEV)** approach, and measured the economic benefits accruing not just to direct beneficiaries such as GLAMs visitors, but to “non-users”—people who value GLAMs’ existence even if they have not recently visited one.

The study found that the return on investment “is on par with government investments in transportation infrastructure projects,” noted Prof. Jack Lohman, CBE, President of the Canadian Museums Association. “Now, more than ever, is a critical time to ensure that museums have adequate funding. We must fully recognize that the GLAM sector feeds the economy and innovation, and forms an integral part of the fabric of our nation, benefiting Canadians of all ages, backgrounds and regions.”

The study found that:

- For every dollar invested in non-profit museums, galleries, archives and libraries society gets nearly four dollars in benefits
- This is a value so great, that even non-users recognize the importance of GLAMS to society at large and to future generations. Non-users said they’d be prepared to contribute \$22 per year for museums, \$17 for galleries and libraries and \$14 for archives as a donation towards the maintenance of these institutions

In all, 96% of respondents surveyed for the study said that museums contribute to our quality of life. Indeed, the study found that visiting GLAMs can be linked with improved health and wellbeing – equivalent to receiving a monetary bonus of \$1,440 a year.

Visits to these facilities – online and in-person- are associated with many other important societal benefits including greater literacy, curiosity, innovation, knowledge and creativity, increased rates of volunteerism and a better sense of community. These are incredibly important qualities in an increasingly divisive world.

Additionally, the Museums of Mississippi Mills benefit the community in several ways including:

- By collecting and displaying artifacts, archival documents, and stories that might otherwise be lost to time, current and future generations understand their roots and the evolution of their community.
- Serving as educational resource places where residents and visitors to Mississippi Mills learn about the history, traditions, and achievements of this community and especially for schools by offering interactive learning experiences.
- Contributing to the sense of place and cultural identity of the community and fostering a sense of pride among residents.
- Having a positive economic impact on the community. The Mississippi Mills Museums are destination attractions They attract Ottawa area and international tourists and “VFR’s – visitors to friends and relatives - who spend money on accommodations, dining, and other local businesses. These activities boost the local economy and create jobs.
- Engaging the community through events, workshops, and exhibitions that bring people together, fostering a sense of belonging and community spirit.

- Being places for research : The Mill of Kintail, North Lanark Regional and the Textile Museum all possess invaluable primary sources and materials for students of all ages, writers, genealogists and families studying the unique history,
- Interpretating and Telling the Story of Mississippi Mills: Museums are skilled at presenting historical narratives and stories in an engaging and accessible way. They make this community's unique history come alive for visitors, helping them connect with the past on a personal level.
- Preservation of Endangered Artifacts: The museums preserve artifacts or documents that have a fragility, and are important for future generations to learn from.
- Promotion of heritage tourism: The Mississippi Mills museums serve as tourist attractions, helping draw visitors to the area, particularly from the Nation's Capital. This activity benefits local hospitality, retail, and real estate businesses and promotes the community on a broader scale.
- Community Pride and Sense of Ownership: When a community is actively involved in the creation and operation of its museums, it fosters a sense of pride and ownership among residents. They see the museum as a reflection of their community's identity.

Overall, the Museums of Mississippi Mills play a crucial role in preserving, celebrating, and sharing the unique aspects of the community's history, cultural makeup and sense of place and continuity.

6.0 Addressing Challenges for the Mississippi Mills Museums

Each of the museums demonstrate exemplary dedication, work, contributions to collecting, preserving, presenting, and celebrating the history, and life and times of the people of this community

Common Issues

This review process has been informative and invaluable in identifying priority challenges to be considered and hopefully addressed by each museum and also on certain matters in a collaborative and phased way.

The challenges facing all three museum sites are not uncommon to museums across Ontario and Canada. These include in varying degrees and are self-explanatory, by title as follows:

- Identity and Branding
- Collections Management
- HR – Staffing, Volunteers capacity
- Governance and operations – Succession of Board members, clarification of site management

- Partnerships, Relationship Building
- Funding models annually below provincial and national museum standards

Funding Issues

Created from the amalgamation of three municipalities in 1998, the municipality inherited the current four existing museums.

Subsequent municipal Councils, the Boards, volunteers and staff of each museum have to be lauded for their dedicated work and creativity in growing the programming and operations – and maintaining and preserving these important heritage sites and their collections. For a municipality of this population and tax base, this responsibility has been challenging indeed.

Furthermore, Mississippi Mills is located within the sphere of the National Capital Region-and museum goers from Canada's capital are known as the most discerning and knowledgeable museum attendees in the country.

This report is intended to recognize the good work of the past by Mississippi Mills museums, but also, it is meant to push all involved to reach and potentially exceed the standards for excellence promoted by the Ontario Museum Association.

With a current population of some 16,000 – meeting National and Provincial Per Capita Funding Levels has indeed been a challenge.

In fact, the municipal ratio of funds invested as a percentage of the overall budget for each museum has declined – a downward trajectory that is concerning – and adds considerable stress and pressure on staff and volunteer Board members serving each museum.

As a result of the funding differences, the Mississippi Mills museums have been put in the position of competing with each for available municipal support. That needs to stop – it is extremely counterproductive.

This report recommends a revised funding model eventually with suggestions on how to develop this. The status quo municipal funding allocation enables basic operations to occur, annually – but arguably, the optimal standards for programming, collections conservation, staffing, and site maintenance are not being attained

7.0 The Museums of Mississippi Mills – Summary of Site Meetings

For this report, as mentioned, each museum was visited and discussions held on site. These are summarized as follows:

North Lanark Regional Museum, North Lanark Historical Society

Founded in 1965 in the former Appleton Schoolhouse, the North Lanark Museum was the first museum in this portion of Lanark County. As such, it took on the big role of preserving the history and telling the story of the town of Almonte, and the townships of Ramsay, Lanark, Beckwith, Pakenham. The museum and contents in the historic school were suddenly and sadly lost to fire in 1979. The current facility was donated by supporter/patron Doreen Drummond and moved by the Drummond Company whose expertise is in relocating and repurposing buildings.

For the past forty-four years volunteers, Board members and staff have been dedicated to the immense commitment over the years to repurpose what was originally a non-museum structure, to a facility that honours the stories and the collections that the museum has been entrusted with.



Museum with accessibility ramp

Services to the community

The North Lanark Regional Museum provides these services:

- Tells the story of the whole of the amalgamated municipality of Mississippi Mills

- Is open and accessible year round
- Has 1000 plus hours of volunteerism contributed annually
- Displays its collection with authenticity and integrity
- Interprets tangible links to the origins and histories of the former municipalities of Almonte, and the Townships of Ramsay, Pakenham, the villages and hamlets of Appleton, Clayton, Blakeney and Pakenham
- Truly impressive achievements in events, building trust relationships with early pioneer families
- Has an impressive archival collection for research purposes



Challenges

These include:

- Difficulty in recruiting and retaining a professional Museum Coordinator/Curator Position. Salary is low in comparison to other museums and benefits are lacking
- Municipal Support – Shrinkage from 36% in 2018 to 13% in 2023 – Ideally and eventually, this needs to be increased to finance a full-time museum trained and professional position, with benefits comparable to the Goulbourn Museum in neighbouring rural Ottawa and t
- Collections Management – Handled with care to date – need for acid free storage units. Digitization of the documents and artifacts – to enable online research and revenue generatgion – has yet to be completed
- Identity and Branding – As the de facto museum that tells the story for the whole of Mississippi Mills – “North Lanark” is confusing. This report suggests consideration for a rebrand – and name change for the museum to **The Mississippi Mills Museum**. The historical society – North Lanark Historical Society as a separate entity – can keep its name intact. A re-brand and promotion will boost attendance from current levels
- Board Succession – As with all museums recruitment of new members who have interest, knowledge, time, ideas and diverse backgrounds – is recommended
- Maximizing the site potential for events, concerts etc. places demands on staff – seasonal – and volunteers.

- Maintaining the site has been a challenge for the volunteer board – 4 buildings, site landscaping, snow removal, and water – new well installation are all part of the operation. A new agreement with the Municipality is required to clarify what services are the responsibility of which party.

Recently installed storage buildings



New well installation, Summer, 2023

Mill of Kintail – Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority

The Mill of Kintail – featuring the R.Tait Mackenzie and Dr James Naismith Museums – is a true heritage gem. For 50 years this site has been a much appreciated destination for residents and visitors from Mississippi Mills, the National Capital Region and beyond.

Services to the Community

August 20, 2023 the Mill of Kintail celebrated fifty years of being an accessible and inspirational site with one thousand visitors attending. The Mill is really a wonderful park, with unique natural and cultural heritage that inspires and delights visitors – from TripAdvisor reviews – and is much loved by area residents of Mississippi Mills attending. Since the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority took over management and operations of the site, it has been well preserved and programmed amid challenges of provincial budget pressures, and reviews of Conservation Authority mandates.





The Mill presents two Internationally significant stories associated with it's founder , R.Tait Mackenzie and his lifelong friend, James Naismith,

Key services provided at this site, managed by the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority include:

- Natural trails system
- Ecological Story and MVCA Conservation and Management of the Watershed
- Architectural Heritage -One of Ontario and Canada's earliest examples of restoration and adaptive re-use
- Internationally significant stories: RT Mackenzie and the modern day Olympics, his role in development of Physical Education, Physiotherapy, his international renown as sculptor
- Dr James Naismith: Invention of basketball one of the world's major sports

Challenges :

This review process revealed a number of challenges currently faced by the MVCA and its operation of the Mill.

These include:

- Utmost priority during Fall 2023 and Winter 2024 is the clarification and decision-making around the MVCA's funding and operations model for the Mill of Kintail. The current provincial government has signalled a change in it's funding model. Future funding is now subject to City of Ottawa and other Municipalities in the watershed signing on to continue funding the Mill and other MVCA sites

- Naismith Collection (2010-2017 acquired) – Not professionally assembled, needs work in conservation, management, storage, digitization
- Mackenzie Collection – What happens to it if MVCA funding shrinks ? There are liabilities in that a portion of the collection belongs to external owners – the University of Pennsylvania
- Conservation issues for 3 dimensional objects – Sculpture “plasters” that are invaluable
- Staffing and volunteers – 4 to 5 staff arguably needed to effectively program, maintain, curate and conserve the site, and provide educational and learning opportunities for visitors and schools
- Activating and optimizing the Site’s potential for events, weddings, concerts, etc.
- Governance – Should a Friends of Mill of Kintail organization be developed to support, potentially program the site ?

Mississippi Valley Textile Museum

Services to the Community

From humble beginnings first operating out of a retail space in downtown Almonte in the 1980's, over the past thirty years the rehabilitation of the wonderful heritage building as part of the Rosamond Mill complex has seen the museum evolve into a destination for presenting the history of the textile industry in the Mississippi River watershed.

The Rosamond Gallery Space at the Textile Museum has in effect, become more than a local art exhibit venue – it has over the past several years become nationally and internationally known as an excellent space to display visual art shows that attracts thousands of visitors annually to Almonte and Mississippi Mills

It has become in essence, a Cultural Centre for Almonte and Mississippi Mills.



MVTM National Historic Site



Upper Hall displays on Textile History



Rosamond Gallery Space hosting exemplary exhibitions

Achievements

Adusting to, and surviving the pandemic years, the MVTM has achieved these key milestones:

- 5 year Strategic Plan
- Board succession
- Gallery Bookings for exhibits for next 2-3 years
- Becoming well known in textile industry and art circles nationally and internationally for hosting excellent exhibitions
- Completing major heritage building restoration and rehabilitation work – from unheated space to now a building capable of shows, staff, researchers, gift shop, the collection and exhibits . The site is now on an annual life-cycle maintenance mode

Challenges

The MVTM has these current challenges to work with:

- Ongoing costs with life-cycle, and maintenance of large heritage building
- Provision of Schools programs to meet the demand and needs of area schools
- Staff capacity for maintaining and conserving the collection and the volume and intensity of the bookings
- Telling the whole story of the Textile industry within the Mississippi River watershed – beyond Mississippi Mills boundaries – is a demanding ongoing role.

8.0 Museums of Mississippi Mills - Comparables

The Museums of Mississippi Mills are in a comparable situation in 2023 - just emerging from the huge impacts of the pandemic years of 2020-2022 – to what the community museums – eleven in total in the neighbouring City of Ottawa – were in, in 2004-2006.

At that time the City of Ottawa Council and Administration were experiencing budget challenges and pressures, much as the Municipality of Mississippi Mills is feeling at this juncture in 2023. The City – post-amalgamation – was trying to make decisions and rationalize what to do with these community museums, operating in the shadow of the big, and well-funded National Museums.

The challenges faced then by the City of Ottawa and the community museums and eventually dealt with by the Museum Sustainability Plan, are relevant and comparable to what the municipality and the museums of Mississippi Mills are dealing with in the 2020's.

These challenges include:

- 2003/4 – Budget cuts, “rationalization pressure
- Council discussed openly, offloading museums, amalgamating museums, all without a plan
- Museums did not feel validated for their work and so the museum and heritage community “rose-up” and pushed back against Council’s cutbacks
- There were no prior “Service Agreements” between the municipality and the museums that spelled out the partnership for funding operations, programming, and site maintenance and life cycle work

As a consequence of addressing these issues, the Museum Sustainability Plan was adopted by Council for 2007- 2010. It has been renewed over subsequent years, providing effective stability for staffing, marketing and collections management for Ottawa’s community museums

The MSP includes priority elements that the Mississippi Mills Museums arguably require. These are:

- a. Full time, professional, museums trained staffing was the first priority . The Plan included funding to individual museums to enhance staffing capacity to improve museum facilities, research, programming, exhibits, publications and visitor services
- b. A recognition that each museum told an important chapter in telling the overall history of Ottawa
- c. Formalization of the Ottawa Museum Network (comprised of museum directors from the community and city operated museums) to market, fundraise and coordinate cross-museum services;
- d. Funding to extend the collections management software to the community museums;

- e. Development of the a website to tell the Ottawa Story at a high level and to provide a coordinated link to the related museums websites;
- f. Establishment of an interim storage facility and planning for the longer-term centralized Preservation Centre for the cataloguing and appropriate care of the growing inventory of museum artefacts.
- g. 55% - 60% average Contributions of City to Museums Core Budget
- h. 80-90% core City funding to sustain the Osgoode and Goulbourn rural museums/historical societies

Recognition of the Long Term Value of the Museum Sustainability Plan

Over time, the museums of Ottawa have been recognized for adding to civic life in that municipality in these ways – the museums:

- Make you feel at home in Ottawa through meaningful experiences and discovery
- Foster civic engagement and pride of place
- Support local businesses by attracting resident visitors and tourists
- Investment in community museums is an investment in Ottawa's future

Additionally, the Ottawa museums individually became stronger by working together through

- Collaborations, partnerships and communication
- Shared vision and goals
- Increased capacity and improved infrastructure for museums operations and management

Other Comparables

Listing these thumbnail sketches of comparable museums – it must be pointed out that these are not “apples to apples” comparables.

What is recommended however is over time in 2023-2024 that a tour and meetings of these sites be arranged. There are lessons to be learned in how these museums operate to the standards that they do with the funding and governance models that they function under.

The tour group from Mississippi Mills would be the suggest Working Group members, identified in the Conclusion section of this report.

Comparable examples are:

Goulbourn Museum

Goulbourn Museum preserves and interprets material significant to the Goulbourn Township area before, during, and after the municipality's incorporation. There are 6 staff roles at

Goulbourn Museum including Executive Director, Communications, Registrar, Programming, Digitization Strategy, and Exhibitions Officer



Contact: Tracey Donaldson, Executive Director
<https://goulbournmuseum.ca/about/contact-us/>

Carleton Place and Beckwith Museum



Contact Jennifer Irwin Manager 613-253-7013
cpbmuseum@outlook.com

Perth Museum – Municipal position



Contact: Kathryn Jamieson Museum and Heritage
Tourism Manager, Perth Museum

613-267-1947

Surveying these comparable museums - lessons can be drawn from their operational and governance models for the museums of Mississippi Mills. Each site has professional, knowledgeable museums professionals who are skilled in operations and collections management, in fundraising and grantsmanship, in marketing and communications and in partnership building within the community.

9.0 Summary of potential actions from The August 2023 Museums Meeting

A meeting with representatives of each of the Mississippi Mills museums was convened on Thursday, August 24th at 2:00 pm. Attending and representing the Mill of Kintail (MVCA) – Scott Lawryk and Stephanie Kolsters, the North Lanark Regional Museum – Alex Gillis and Doreen Wilson, and the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum - Michael Rikley-Lancaster and Charlotte Farmer.

Following a presentation made that summarized the meetings and input into the process to date, two discussion groups were created , with a representative of each museum participating.

Question Asked : For the business of future collaboration to improved services to the community - how can the Museums of Mississippi Mills work cooperatively ?

This workshop session was started off with introductory remarks for the ensuing discussion to consider:

- Advocacy – How can the museums work together to support each other, and in particular, the Mill of Kintail, which is facing a challenging funding model for 2023-24
- Community Awareness and Promotion – Can the museums identify ways to collaborate effective on promotion and marketing programs and events ?
- Training/ professional development sessions? Are there opportunities to share in training, professional development or information sessions for staff, board members and volunteers
- Co sponsor of Events ? Museums Day, Museum Month –
- Partnership building with other sectors – schools, arts, seniors care facilities etc
-

Following the break-out discussions the meeting reconvened and the results of each discussion group were shared. These are summarized with added in suggested timelines as follows:

| Suggested Actions from Discussions | | |
|---|--|---|
| Action | Who leads | Timelines |
| Development of Service Agreement for Museums | Municipality -Culture & Rec | Fall 2023 for implementation in 2024 |
| Maintenance and Life Cycle Agreements | Municipality with relevant museum – Culture/Rec with maintenance staff | “ |
| MM Alliance Renewal - formalize business protocol and meet regarding potential business /projects opportunities | Museums with Municipality | Meet as needed around specific collaborative projects |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| More social media engagement for the Museums of Mississippi Mills as a collective – eg a new group Facebook- Instagram presence | Museums – working collaboratively and as joint administrators | Winter 2024 development Spring 2024 launch |
| Advocacy for Mill of Kintail – connect with MVCA municipal funding partners, particularly City of Ottawa | Municipality – Mayor, Council , senior staff | Fall 2023 |
| Develop protocol with Algonquin Anishinabe Nation | Municipality, museums, with the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan or Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Cultural Centre | Fall 2023 – Winter 2024 |

10.0 Conclusion, Recommendations and Next Steps

The museums collectively make an invaluable contribution to the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of the community as a whole. They provide an integral service to the Municipality of Mississippi Mills – at the same level as libraries and sports facilities, arguably.

Improvements identified by municipal staff, the Sagam Report, and this review process are needed to be worked on to ensure sustainability of the Mississippi Mills Museums. How and when to implement priority recommendations are the key next steps

Recommended: Preparation of A Sustainable Financial Plan for Funding the Museums to Provincial Standards

Municipal investments in community museums pay dividends economically, socially, and culturally. The Mississippi Mills museums are under-invested by the municipality, as compared to national, and provincial standards. Recognizing this fact is a key first step. It will, however, take a concerted effort over the next several years to meet recommended provincial standards for museums funding.

This chart below, gratefully prepared by Tiffany MacLaren Manager of Community and Economic Development Municipality of Mississippi Mills shows the current level of municipal investment into the four museums – and projections – for what level of funding would be required to meet provincial standards.

Museum Funding Comparison – based on 2022 Operating budget provided by Museums

| Museum | Operating Budget | 2022 funding from MM | Current % of operating | 30% | 35% | 40% | 50% |
|---|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Mill of Kintail Museums (Dr. James Naismith & R. Tait McKenzie) | \$94,789 | \$12,400 | 13% | \$28,437 | \$33,176.15 | \$37,915 | \$47,395 |
| Mississippi Valley Textile Museum | \$464,890 | \$70,730 | 15% | \$139,467 | \$162,712 | \$185,956 | \$232,445 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| North Lanark Regional Museum | \$140,577 | \$27,315 | 19% | \$42,173 | \$49,201 | \$56,231 | \$70,289 |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----|----------|----------|----------|----------|

The impulse to outright dismiss these projections as unattainable should be resisted. ***A business plan for fund-raising, sponsorship and partnership-building*** over ensuing years, is highly recommended. Having a well prepared and supported plan can achieve the goal for attracting investments into the Mississippi Mills museums that will sustain these institutions well into the future.

To accomplish this – a Working Group – consisting of Municipal Council representative(s), staff, Museum Representatives and external museum resources persons is advised to set out the terms of reference, scope of work and recruitment of community champions to lead fundraising – will all be keys to achieving a successful fund-raising campaign

Recommended: Adoption of the Practice of Service Agreements between Mississippi Mills and the Museums for 2024 and Beyond

For this report, a very productive meeting was held with City of Ottawa’s senior manager for heritage and museums funding, Anik Despres. Anik outlined the purpose and function of the Service Agreements with Museums and recommends them highly as an administrative and management tool and as a key foundation component of the partnership between the municipality and the community museums

Why ? Service Agreements provide clarity, understanding and accountability between the museum and the municipality. For provision of municipal funding, the Service Agreement maps out services and responsibilities provided for each of the partner museums, including these categories:

- Life Cycle, Site Maintenance: In the case of municipally owned sites – the Agreement spells out regular maintenance responsibilities , including landscape maintenance, snow removal, and basic maintenance to museum structures.

For the annual municipal investment, museums are asked to provide a summary of:

- Previous year’s activities
 - Operating challenges and achievements
 - Statistics: Total attendance, total number of volunteers and volunteer hours
- Upcoming Years Activities
- Description of the programming, activities and services planned for the year
 - Work Plan listing specific goals, actions required and timelines
 - Operating budget pressures

Community Impact

- How will the museum's activities benefit the community at large ?
- How does the organization reflect and engage equity seeking communities
- How do you measure peer and public recognition and appreciation
- Who Is your target audience? Describe promotional or audience development initiatives the museum will be undertaking
- Provide the museum's marketing plan
- Is the museum undertaking any collaborative initiatives or partnerships ?

Organizational Effectiveness

- List of staff, key volunteer positions and responsibilities
- Bios of key leaders
 - Annual Report
- Description of changes made to mandate, objectives by-laws, policies

Recommended: Evaluation of Mississippi Mills Museums Services by Peer Professionals Commencing 2025.

Museums management and operations deserve to be reviewed by knowledgeable museums professionals. The Ottawa-Mississippi Mills area has these people available due to the national museums presence, and Algonquin Colleges Museums Studies program.

In Ottawa, the Museums Service Agreements are peer reviewed by museum professionals – a practice which is heartily recommended to be implemented for 2024-25 by the Municipality of Mississippi Mills. Peer reviewers are given a basic honorarium (\$150 in Ottawa) and for this they do a very good job of constructive evaluation and providing each museum and the municipality with recommendations on how to strengthen operations and programming.

With Service Agreements in place, it is recommended that the Municipality arrange for peer evaluators – museums professionals – to review the accomplishments and plans for each museum.

Recommended : Identify and Complete A Collaborative Project For the Museums Collective in 2024

For the future, Mississippi Mills Museums are advised to work with the municipality under an adapted Ontario Museums Association protocol for working collaboratively in a professional and business manner.

Meetings would be focused on a priority cooperative project - for example May is Museum Month, or Digitalization of documents through a shared grant application would be potential projects

Additionally development of a a joint Algonquin Anishinabeg Protocol – with Algonquins of Pikwakanagan /Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg is advised in order to present the more complete history of human presence in Mississippi Mills.

Recommended: Advocacy for the Mill of Kintail

It is recommended with some urgency that Municipality – represented by Mayor/Council reach out to Mayor's office of the City of Ottawa regarding the Memorandum Of Understanding process to urge support for continued partnership in the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, and specifically the historically important Mills of Kintail. A bold measure would be to invite Mayor Sutcliffe to an on-site visit, tour and reception to encourage the City's ongoing support.

Next Steps

A number of follow-up steps will take place in weeks ahead. These include

1. Presentation of this report to Council – Tuesday October 17th
2. Assist with adaptation of Service Agreements, Protocols, Identification of independent Peer Assessors – October – November
3. Orientation session with each museum for preparing for 2024 Service Agreement Reviews

Thank you !

Jim Mountain

Facilitator for this Museums Review Process

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