

Shelburne Council declares February to be Black History Month

Written By PETER RICHARDSON

Council on Monday heard two interesting presentations, in an otherwise uneventful evening.

The first, from Alethia O'Hara-Stephenson pertained to declaring February Black History Month in Shelburne, as part of the greater effort to see it declared in all of Dufferin County. Alethia brought with her, three students from CDDHS in Shelburne, who were there to represent, the Youth Advisory Committee, a group from within the school, promoting diversity and acceptance of multi-culturalism.

Her presentation recognized many of the early black settlers in the County, including, George Hannahson, William and Mary Ghant and Richard Pierpoint, who settled in East Garafraxa, after a distinguished career as a soldier in the British army.

Alethia also paid tribute to more recent prominent black leaders such as Shelburne Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson, Phil Dewar, Alton Stephenson and Andrew and Juli-Anne Charles, who coincidentally followed her presentation with one of their own, for Streams Community Hub.

Council accepted the presentation and proclaimed February as Black History Month in Shelburne. They also authorized the raising of the Pan African Flag, for the month, with the raising ceremony to be held Feb. 3 at 9:00 a.m.

It was likewise decided, that portions of an art display, scheduled for February, at the Museum of Dufferin, would be hung in the Town Hall gallery, if possible.

Streams Community Hub

Following this presentation, Andrew and Juli'Anne Charles, a husband and wife team from Shelburne, who have organized a federally incorporated, youth focused, arts centred charity, Streams Community Hub, made a presentation asking Council to help them build a facility to house their charity and provide space within which to run their programs.

The ask was for Council to donate the land upon which to build the campus, in Fiddle Park, at the East end of town. The buildings themselves, would be a pop-up modular design, based on using shipping containers modified for this purpose. Used successfully in other endeavours, the construction model, is extremely cost effective, easily enlarged and totally removable if necessary. The charity, currently has helped 200 youth and has amassed over 1,700 volunteer hours doing it.

To assist in the construction of the building, Streams has joined forces with Giant, a world leading company in the use of containers, for other than shipping purposes and have come up with an intriguing campus design using custom modified modular container construction. The area required would be less than an acre and the proposed cost only about \$4 million when complete. Using this concept, the buildings can be added individually as time and finances allow and the whole project is fully modular and will easily interconnect with existing components.

Council was highly supportive of the presentation, as representation of the arts is truly lacking in Shelburne, and Streams whole purpose is to inspire youth through the use of the arts, be that music, performing or cooking. There was however, some hesitation regarding Fiddle Park. It was thought that the park was too far from town and there was no easy access, or walkability at this time. Also, the strategic plan for the park is still being compiled and there are numerous potential uses. Additionally, no real infrastructure exists for Fiddle Park and building it would be very expensive.

Instead, Council asked if Streams was open to partnering with an existing complex, such as the CDRC. Currently, the recreation centre is under utilized but more importantly, all the infrastructure is in place, including parking and it is walkable from most of

Town. There is also space for additional buildings as described in the presentation. In all, it would offer many amenities at little cost and still be able to provide for the structural ideas of the presentation. Andrew Charles said they would definitely be open to discussions, especially as this would allow almost instantaneous progress. Since a large part of their funding is grant based and having a space facilitates a better grant process, this might be a major win for both Streams Community Hub and the Town of Shelburne.

Other business

In other business, Council heard the final Financial update from Treasurer Carey Holmes for the last quarter of 2019. They were told that the financial audit will be conducted in early February, which would show the entire 2019 year end picture .

The library requested the use of Grace Tipling Hall for their March Break activities and the waving of the \$300+ rental fees, which Council agreed to after some discussion about the fee wavering. Deputy Mayor Anderson questioned whether or not this fell in line with the adopted policy and was told by Clerk Jennifer Willoughby, that it did, as the upper limit had been set at \$500. The Deputy Mayor commented that Council had discussed how much money they were losing by waiving all these rental fees and that it amounted to a considerable sum, hence the setting of the limit. Coun. Lindsay Wegener thought that each case needed to be decided upon its own merits and that in this case, as the Town was receiving a benefit for it's school children, perhaps the waiver was warranted. Mayor Anderson agreed, but was still concerned about lost revenues in general. He was assured by the Clerk that since the setting of the limit, requests had actually been reduced and that Council could revisit the limit if it so wished, by reviewing the applicable by-law.

Before going into closed session, Council acknowledged the nominations for two individuals to receive Community Excellence awards.