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City approves self-cleaning washroom near mall

Written by Jay D Haughton Friday, Nov 19 2021, 5:00 AM



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Kenora City Council has approved the construction of a single-unit self-cleaning public washroom for 15 Chipman Street.

The approval came at a Nov 16 Council meeting, after being presented to the Committee of the Whole on Nov 9.

Adam Smith, Director of Development Services said this washroom will hopefully fill a void of a shortage of public washrooms in the community.

"We've heard loud and clear that there are not enough public washrooms in our downtown. I think in that area in particular there definitely isn't many accessible facilities," said Smith

The city will use this self-cleaning establishment as a pilot project to see if more can be used around Kenora, and regionally.

"Hopefully it will be a model that will be effective to address some of those issues that may come with a standard or traditional type of washroom but also, in the long run, present some savings when it comes from a maintenance standpoint," added Smith.

Smith added the city hasn't awarded the construction of the washroom yet but has issued a request for proposal. The specifications of the washroom will include automated washing cycles, being anti-graffiti proof, and will be fully accessible.

The cities expectation for the start of the construction of the washroom will be by spring or summer of 2022.

The price tag of the self-cleaning washroom is \$150,000, which according to Smith was built into the 2021 Capital Budget.

The washroom is a part of Kenora's Downtown Revitalization (DTR) that would bring a pedestrian-friendly space to the area of Chipman Street and First Street South. Smith hopes the beautification of the space will spur additional attraction to local downtown businesses.

"We're going to look at green space and other amenities. Those pieces are important to creating a little more activation in that area, and I hope it's just the start of what we hope is to see some broader businesses development and investment into that part of the downtown," explained Smith.

The city is still in the design phase for the space and will be looking to finalize that portion of the project in the coming months.

The whole beautification cost of the space will cost \$408,426. Through the Reaching Homes: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, the Kenora District Services Board (KDSB) has received \$150,000 to allocate as a contribution towards this project.

The city was able to put \$100,000 towards the project from the Municipal Accommodation Tax, and \$17,500 from the DRT holdback. The net impact of the tax levy was \$117,500.

The city has been working on the revitalization project since 2004. Other project phases focused on Main Street, First Street, Second Street, and the Harbourfront area.

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