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Parks Canada should make tree-clearing plan public

THE KINGSTON WHIG-STANDARD

The Kingston Whig-Standard

Wed Oct 12 2011

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Section: Editorial/Opinion

Byline: THE WHIG-STANDARD

Fort Henry and New York City's famous Broadway theatre district have a lot in common.

It's the tourists that keep them vibrant and make them a greater success.

Just as theatregoers in New York take in plays on Broadway, it's the district as a tourist attraction that drives attendance and makes it a premiere attraction in a city that bodes endless entertainment opportunities.

Similarly, Kingstonians interested in Kingston's military and history place Fort Henry at the top of the attractions list. There are legions of military and history attractions in Kingston, but the fort, built in the 1800s to defend the shoreline from invaders, is our city's most important piece of military history for tourism.

Parks Canada wants the fort to continue to flourish. The federal agency plans to remove trees on the property. According to a Parks Canada's report, the plan to cut down trees is to improve the view to the historic military fortress -- bring it back to that original looking shoreline.

In many cases, clearing trees is part of property maintenance. And in this case, Parks Canada maintains that the trees must be removed to protect underground archeological sites.

Who knows what treasures could be found on the property?

Parks Canada maintains the viewsapes are critical for national historic sites. In documents to apply for historic site designations, however, there is no mention that viewsapes are important or a criteria in the application.

If Parks Canada believes the project is vital to the future of Fort Henry, it should make its plan public. It's a simple step that would help clear up any confusion as to why tree removal is required.

More importantly, a public meeting will allow for transparency to taxpayers who deserve a better explanation on what exactly tax dollars are being spent.

What's important for Fort Henry and Kingston is that the tourist gem continues to attract new visitors each year. If the vegetation plan aids that growth, there should be no issue with sharing that vision with the public.

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Edition: Final

Length: 337 words

Idnumber: 201110120022

Tone: Neutral ■

Ad Value: \$364 Circulation: 26,455 ¹

Keyword Highlighting: On/Off

A love for all things wood ; UPPER CANADA VILLAGE

STANDARD FREEHOLDER

The Cornwall Standard-Freeholder

Wed Oct 12 2011

Page: 5

Section: News

Byline: CHERYL BRINK

MORRISBURG -- The last weekend of the season at Upper Canada Village certainly wasn't a quiet one.

The tourist attraction was buzzing as visitors stopped in to see the handiwork of wood craftsmen from across the region.

"There's generally a lot of interest," said the village's Sheila Farrell about the second annual wood lovers' event. "It's amazing how much is going on with wood."

Makers of canoes, violins, furniture, bows and arrows and other items gathered to show off their skills.

"It piques the interest of a lot of people," said Farrell. "They're pretty amazed at the level of talent."

Doug Long has been building canoes by hand since 1997, when he retired from his job as an engineer.

He formed his own company, Mountain-based Longwood Canoes, and has built over two dozen in the last 14 years in addition to repairs and restorations.

"I have always been a woodworker," he said. "And I love the outdoors. To me it was a natural combination."

He said his method is a European spinoff of traditional birch bark canoes.

"There's few people building these now," he said, but added that he's connected to a network of similar craftsmen through the Wood Canoe Builders Guild.

Long said it takes him about 200 hours to complete a canoe, from the time he chooses the right cedar and cherry wood until he's doing the finishing touches.

He said he enjoys bringing his work to the public during events such as the wood lovers' weekend, so he can share his passion.

"Some people know a lot ... and some people know nothing," he said.

Pierre Geneau agreed that the information he provides to visitors is often takes them by surprise. He's worked at the village's mill for 27 years, explaining techniques and the time it takes to cut different woods, which are all used at the site for repairs and construction.

"They really can't believe it's water powered," he said of the sawmill.

The wood lovers' weekend was the wrap-up event to a full season at the village.

"We're up in our activity by about 9%," said Susan Le Clair of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. "We're up by 10,000 people over last year. That's the really good news about the season."

She attributed the higher numbers to sunny skies, a shiny new train and the discovery centre that opened in August.

She said reaction to the additional displays inside the centre has been very positive.

"They really seem to love the layout, the look of it, the quality of all the interactive exhibits," she said.

"We had a lot of really good programs this year," she added. "The team worked so hard on all of the special events."

Though the village is now closed for the summer season, the popular Alight at Night event will return on Dec. 2.

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Illustration:

CHERYL BRINK Standard-Freeholder Doug Long had his homemade wooden canoes on display at Upper Canada Village on Saturday, Oct. 8, as part of wood lovers weekend.

Edition: Final

Length: 466 words

Idnumber: 201110120045

Tone: Positive ■

Ad Value: \$763 Circulation: 14,280¹

Keyword Highlighting: On/Off

History goes to head of the class; Department instructed to pay special attention to qualified funding applicants with plans to promote Canadian history, minister says

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

The Globe and Mail

Wed Oct 12 2011

Page: A4

Section: National News

Byline: Steven Chase

Dateline: OTTAWA

OTTAWA -- The Harper government, currently pulling out all the stops to commemorate the War of 1812, is shifting emphasis within the federal Heritage Department to focus more on Canadian history.

Canadian Heritage Minister James Moore, who announced Tuesday that Ottawa is plowing nearly \$30-million into the 1812-1814 conflict's bicentennial, says he wants to sharpen efforts to teach Canada about its past.

"In only four of Canada's 10 provinces are students required to take history before they graduate from high school," he said. "I think that's a sadly low number so I want to work on improving that."

Mr. Moore said he's not changing the criteria for funding that Heritage disburses each year, but said the department has nevertheless been instructed to pay special attention to qualified applicants with plans to promote history.

"We've been very, very clear within the department that we want to make sure that those organizations that have a clear agenda for promoting or supporting Canadian history or Canadian identity are things that we'd like to see get supported by the department," he said.

The Conservatives have come under fire in the past for cuts to arts programs, and Mr. Moore was quick to dismiss any inference that this shift would erode Heritage support for culture.

"Arts, culture, official languages, sport programming: All these things are cornerstones of the Department of Canadian Heritage," he said. "That's not going to change."

Commemorations that Ottawa is preparing to support include the 100th anniversary of the NHL, the 200th birthday of Conservative prime minister John A. Macdonald, and the 25th anniversary of the North American free-trade deal, signed by Tory prime minister Brian Mulroney.

With Canada's 150th birthday approaching in 2017, Mr. Moore said, it's important for Canadians to broaden their knowledge of national history. "To have a mindset within the department that tips and tilts a little more toward teaching and supporting the history of Canada is something I think Canadians would welcome."

The minister called upon historically minded groups to apply for support from Canadian Heritage. "I certainly encourage those organization that are teaching Canadian history - regional history, local history, human history ... - to put together programs and compete for those funds."

SIX DEGREES OF EDUCATION / WHAT THE TORIES WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT CANADA

1 2015: The 200th birthday of Conservative prime minister John A. Macdonald

2 2019: The 25th anniversary of the North American free-trade agreement

3 2017: The 100th anniversary of the National Hockey League

4 2012: The 200th anniversary of Manitoba's Selkirk Settlement

5 2017: The 100th anniversary of the First World War battle of Vimy Ridge

6 2017: The 75th anniversary of the Second World War battle of Dieppe

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Length: 433 words

Idnumber: 201110120055

Tone: Positive ■

Ad Value: \$14,482 ■

Circulation: 326,228 ■

Keyword Highlighting: On/Off

\$1M in unspent PUC money could fund MDC



Brockville Recorder and Times

Wed Oct 12 2011

Page: A3

Section: News

Byline: RONALD ZAJAC, THE RECORDER AND TIMES

A million dollars from the reserve fund created with the sale of the city's electricity utility will be shifted from the sewage treatment plant to the Maritime Discovery Centre of the 1000 Islands (MDC) if councillors approve the city's capital budget as proposed.

Councillors spent a sizable part of their regular meeting last night (Tuesday) hearing a broad overview of the proposed 2012 capital budget, part of a new early-bird budget process that aims to see the capital portion approved before the end of the month.

Chief among the items for discussion is the scope and financing of the ongoing water pollution control centre upgrade.

That project, the most expensive capital job in the city's history, was initially valued at \$46 million, split between the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

The work has since come in under budget, with the estimate now "trending" toward \$43 million, said city manager Bob Casselman.

As a result, city officials were hoping to expand the scope of the sewage work to include the main pumping station on Ford Street, as well as the force main from the pumping station to the main sewage plant, added Casselman.

However, he added, the city is not confident the senior levels of government will agree to extend that scope.

That means the city will have less to pay for its third of the project, leaving \$1 million from the PUC proceeds fund that can go toward another large capital item: \$1,450,000 needed for the city's portion of the MDC costs.

Councillors are expected to discuss the plan next Tuesday, when they sit down for a three-hour capital budget "workshop" to hash out the details.

Councillor Jane Fullarton is worried about making such a decision so quickly, noting that, should the federal government end up approving an expanded scope to the sewage plant project, the city will have to find another \$1 million.

"It's a really big variable in terms of us passing a budget," said Fullarton.

Casselmann had earlier suggested ways of coming up with the city's share of expanded sewage work should that be the case: dipping into sewer reserves, placing the project on the main capital list while taking others off, or issuing debentures.

Mayor David Henderson suggested that is a dilemma the city will not have to face.

"The official answer we have received, it's no," said the mayor.

"You would have to make your process going forward based on that."

City operations director Conal Cosgrove outlined a list of 2012 capital projects expected to carry a gross cost of \$9,409,373, of which \$668,635 is to come from the 2012 property tax levy.

They include the reconstruction of James Street from Bartholomew to Ormond Street, at a cost of \$700,000, as well as Centre Street, from King Street West to Baxter Drive, at \$408,971.

Other projects include replacing the Ormond Street bridge over Butler's Creek, expected to cost \$540,000, and \$514,562 in annual road paving projects.

The city is proposing an increase of about \$65,000 in paving projects over last year to take advantage of federal gas tax money, said Cosgrove.

However, because the capital budget is being discussed so early, operations officials have not yet identified which streets will need paving in 2012.

Answering a question about the proposed \$47,000 replacement of a damaged police communications tower, City Police Insp. Scott Fraser said the tower, located at the police station, is now leaning toward the nearby train tracks and the force's service provider is no longer allowing its staff members to climb it for repairs.

Police-related items on the capital list will also be sent to the police services board for approval, said Casselman.

The city's 2012 budget schedule calls for city councillors to look at the operating budget in November, taking a break from budget talks in December and resuming in the new year.

The goal is to approve the 2012 budget by January 25, said Casselman.

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Edition: Final

Length: 633 words

Idnumber: 201110120024

Tone: Positive ■

Ad Value: \$670 Circulation: 11,133¹