

Faraday gets update on North Hastings Inspiration Place



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Faraday Township council received an update on the North Hastings Inspiration Place initiative, which encompasses the new library, a community space and thirty new condo units. North Hastings Public Library CEO and head librarian Kim McMunn and the project's capital campaign chair Cheryl Easton gave council a rundown on the new library's floorplan, its financial status and various ways for the community to donate and get involved. In addition to that update, McMunn discloses a special donation to the NHIP made recently by two local realtors; Emma Kearns and Ray Krupa.

At their May 4 council meeting, Mayor Dennis Purcell introduced McMunn and Easton to provide their presentation on the status of the NHIP, which will be breaking ground in the fall of 2022 and is expected to open its doors by late 2023. Faraday representatives to the library board David Giles and Jane Graham were also in attendance but did not speak to council.

Easton, a local businessperson and philanthropist as well as the campaign chair, started up the presentation by saying that; "This is our space and it'll be your potential that makes it come alive. It's a community space for inspiration," she says.

The campaign had asked and gotten feedback from a myriad of community members about what the space will mean to them and why it will be their inspiration space, and they got various responses ranging from a place to bring family, a place for lifelong learning and a place to facilitate and help out home businesses.

While Easton acknowledged the importance of the library in the community, she said the new space will be so much more than a library.

"It's a place for all ages, all abilities, all interests, all cultures and all people. We're developing a vibrant, welcoming space to gather,

learn, dream, discover and explore. We are a community growing together through social connection, creativity and lifelong learning. When I came on board it was made clear that the vision for the space was to welcome all and be accessible to all, the latter the current library cannot offer. The current library will be transformed into a community hub, she says.

Easton said that the space will be open to all residents of Bancroft, Faraday, Limerick Township and beyond, providing services and programming to local and extended communities.

McMunn spoke to council about the floorplan of the new NHIP, saying it would grow from the 2,500 square feet in the old building to almost 5,000 square feet in the new build. She pointed out specific areas of the new space like the learning commons, the early readers' space, the makers' space, the accessible washrooms, the kitchen space and the WIFI patio zone, which will allow patrons to use their connected devices outside while enjoying the weather and their coffee.

The library will be on one floor of the new build while the developer who is building the structure will own the top half of the building, which will have 30 condo apartments. The condos will have their own parking while the library will have a separate area for its patrons parking.

Already, McMunn said that they are getting calls for various organizations who would like to use the new space for their programs.

I'm already getting calls from Belleville and various places asking about organizations such as Alzheimer's and they are looking to post programs in that space. We have a partnership with Baseball for Dad for mental health awareness. They kicked off their program with us this weekend and we'll be promoting mental health awareness in those spaces as well. It's going to be a phenomenal space, she says.

In terms of project funding, NHIP has already procured \$750,000 from the federal government and \$625,000 from the provincial government, which leaves \$500,000 that needs to be raised to make it a reality.

Before we even launched, we had over \$20,000, just from people walking in off the street, so it's going very well. We have a great team behind us and we know we're going to ace this, she says.

McMunn mentioned that they had gotten a Bell Infrastructure funding grant and that Limerick Township had recently given them a cheque for \$10,000.

Easton remarked how supportive the community has been so far for the NHIP.

As word continues to snowball and as things continue to progress, it's very encouraging the way the community is coming on board, she says.

For more information on the NHIP, go to www.northhastingslibrary.ca, or contact Brittany Tomasini, the project support coordinator, at btomasini@bancroft.ca or at 613-332-3331, ext. 210.

There was also more good news on the donation front, which McMunn shared with Bancroft This Week on May 6.

Today, we received a donation from Emma Kearns and Ray Krupa. Together, they donated \$5,000 to sponsor two of our computer workstations. Emma was at the Faraday council meeting and indicated an interest in the library's capital campaign, she says. As grandparents, Ray and Emma are excited to offer this personal donation to build community resources for their grandchildren and other children in the area.