

Tudor and Cashel council proceeds with Millbridge little library

BY MICHAEL RILEY Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Little libraries were once again discussed at the July 6 Tudor and Cashel council meeting. Arising from a suggestion from Nancy Carrol, the clerk and treasurer, at the June 1 meeting, the little libraries initiative was put forward by CPAC to various municipalities in the area. Carrol suggested putting their little library in Millbridge. Council instructed her to get more information and to gauge the public's support for a little library. Township staff conducted a Facebook poll to see if residents were in favour of it, and they were. Council voted to go ahead with the little library but defer its installation until COVID-19 abates. The little library is a free book sharing service where anyone can take or share a book, and it functions on the honour system. While they encourage leaving a book if you take one, it is not necessary for those who want to take a book. They suggest putting these boxes at well lit areas within the townships, like the local park or recreation centre. Wisconsin native Todd Bol gave the little library its start back in 2009. He built a model of a one room schoolhouse in honour of his mother, who was a teacher and loved to read. It really caught on, and Bol along with UW-Madison's Rick Brooks, made the little library an award-winning phenomenon, with some 100,000 little libraries in 100 countries across the globe by 2020.

The little libraries that Carrol suggested to council arose from an email she received on May 26 from CPAC's Shelly Brown. They are part of the Central Hastings Community Sharing Project, and the initiative comes from CPAC community service officer Barb Hunter and Staff Sgt. James Locke. What prompted Locke and Hunter to explore this project was that they had both seen them in different communities and that they each have a couple in the communities where they live. They estimate the library boxes will cost around \$250 to build and have already secured the funding from CPAC. The municipalities where these little libraries will reside are Tweed, Centre Hastings, Marmora, Stirling-Rawdon and now Millbridge in Tudor and Cashel. The cost of installing and maintaining the little libraries in each municipality will be borne by the respective townships. CPAC will be filling the little libraries with books initially.

At the July 6 meeting, Bridger stated that while he was in favour of it, we are still in a pandemic, and as good as things look now, it is still going on.

?Until this is resolved completely, I don't see how we can encourage contact of physical things between people. If somebody puts a book in there and they've got the virus on it, and two hours later somebody goes and gets that book, there's the potential to contribute to the transmission of the virus,? he says. Mayor Libby Clarke acknowledged that Bridger had a good point, and Councillor Noreen Reilly asked Carrol the time frame on when the construction of these little libraries would take place. Carrol said she didn't recall. Bridger made a motion to defer any implementation of the little libraries until the pandemic is over. He reiterated that he had no problem with it, he just didn't think it was the right time. He mentioned that the cottagers on North Jordan Lake Road had their own private little library and thought it was a great idea. Clarke asked Bridger if he knew how they were managing their little library with COVID-19, and he said he did not and they would need to be asked about that. ?If we were to approve these little libraries in the township it puts liability on council if something were to happen with regard to a COVID-19 event,? he says. Deputy Mayor Ron Carroll suggested going and picking the little library up when it's ready, paying for it, and then not installing it until such a time when COVID-19 is no longer a threat. Clarke agreed with this suggestion, saying she'd been thinking the same thing. Reilly made the motion to proceed with the little library, have Carrol contact CPAC about participating and defer its installation post COVID-19 and Councillor Roy Reeds seconded it, and the motion was carried, with Bridger being opposed.