

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MAY 10, 2011

LEASE RENEWAL ARMSTRONG HOUSE, 42 OLD YONGE STREET, THORNHILL SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC THORNHILL ARCHIVES WARD 5

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services and the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services, City Solicitor recommend:

1. That a By-law be enacted to authorize a lease agreement with the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill (SPOHT) for the use of the second storey of the Armstrong House, 42 Old Yonge Street, Thornhill, for SPOHT to house and make accessible to the public its archival collection; for a period of 4 years commencing June 1, 2011 at a rent of \$150.00 per month plus HST with the City's option to review for a further 3 years at a rent to be negotiated.
2. That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute all documents necessary to complete the lease renewal.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan,

- 4.1 To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.

Economic Impact

The City will receive a rental income of \$1,800.00 per annum for 4 years for the use of the second storey of the Armstrong House. The maintenance costs for the property are estimated at \$3,700.00 per year.

Communications Plan

The Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill will be advised of Council's decision as it relates to the lease of the Armstrong House.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council authorization to renew the lease for the second storey of the Armstrong House to the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill in order to house, maintain, and provide public access to its archival collection.

Background - Analysis and Options

A three year lease agreement with the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill for the use of the top floor of the Armstrong House at 42 Old Yonge Street, Thornhill at a rate of \$150.00 per month expired in October 2010 and they have continued to pay monthly rent. The Society used the space to house and provide public access to its archival collection.

The house is a City-owned heritage building and is located in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District as designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1989. The house and an adjacent studio

was restored by the City in 2004. The building is a cultural landmark in the community and has great historical significance. The building is rented for arts exhibits, workshops and for meetings on occasion. The City uses the site for a children's summer arts camp during the months of July and August. These uses generate income for the City.

SPOHT is a Vaughan Community Service Organization that was formed in 1974 for the purpose of advocating for the preservation of Thornhill's built and natural heritage by promoting an awareness of the past and present community. It facilitates a number of workshops, community walking tours, and published a number of local history books and school educational kits. Perhaps most importantly, it organizes the annual Thornhill Village Festival on the 3rd Saturday in September. SPOHT has organized the Festival since 1977 and has helped bring thousands of visitors to Thornhill for the event. In doing so, it has helped give the community an appreciation and understanding of its early history. For a number of years, the Society has collected a number of historic photographs, maps, letters, posters, architectural drawings, videos and oral histories related to the rich history of Thornhill. SPOHT's archival collection has grown considerably over the years

The archives is a significant collection that represents over 30 years of collecting activity by the Society. In particular, its Weaver Collection provides a photographic history of the community, its buildings and people from the 1930s to present time. It is a valuable record of the community's history and is preserved using contemporary archival-quality storage units and a portable environmental control unit.

SPOHT has requested the renewal of the lease agreement for the second storey of the Armstrong House for a four year period for its use as an archives and office. This space will be accessed by the public to do research and view the collection. SPOHT has formally advised it cannot afford an increase in its monthly rental rate and has requested Council consider keeping the rate as is for another four years.

The terms and conditions of the proposed lease agreement will allow for SPOHT to use the second storey of the Armstrong House at a rent of \$1,800.00 per year (\$150.00 per month) plus HST. The term of the agreement will be for four years commencing June 1, 2011.

The Disposal of Property By-law permits a direct lease "on such terms and conditions as may be fixed by Council" including nominal consideration to facilitate the achievement of a specific Corporate program or policy objections.

SPOHT is a not-for-profit organization that has very few avenues to generate revenue to support their archival collection. The group will be undertaking strategies to further develop their financial viability over the next few years and will be actively preparing grant proposals and looking at other forms of revenue generating.

Under the terms and conditions of the proposed agreement, the cost of any improvement or changes to the leased space will be the responsibility of S.P.O.H.T. and changes must first be approved by the City of Vaughan, Buildings & Facilities Department. The City pays all costs related to the building i.e. HVAC, hydro, etc., currently at a cost of \$3700.00 per year, with the exception of the following:

1. Costs relating to S.P.O.H.T.'s telephone and internet use.
2. Cost relating to the cleaning and repair of the leased space, unless otherwise noted in this agreement.
3. Cost relating to the Archives and Special Collection program.
4. Cost of using the main floor space unless for monthly meetings

S.P.O.H.T. acknowledges, that other user groups or individuals are permitted by the City to occupy the main floor of the building, which may include but not be limited to City operated

programs such as summer children camps, adult courses, training, small private permitted functions or any other uses through a permit or lease arrangements.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, this report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
Preserve our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, and the necessary resources to implement this program have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

None

Conclusion

The Disposal of Property By-law provides for a direct lease based on terms and conditions as may be fixed by Council including nominal consideration to facilitate the achievement of a specific policy objective.

The use by SPOHT for its archives is a beneficial addition to the Thornhill community in Vaughan and provides an accessible facility for the public to conduct research activities and learn about the history of the community. The Society has been a long-standing organization in Thornhill and has assisted in the advocacy of the preservation of the historic village core and its landmarks.

Therefore, staff recommend the lease of the second floor of 42 Old Yonge Street to SPOHT at \$150.00 per month with the City paying utility costs.

Attachments

Location Map

Report prepared by:

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Liana Houghton, Senior Manager of Real Estate

Respectfully submitted,

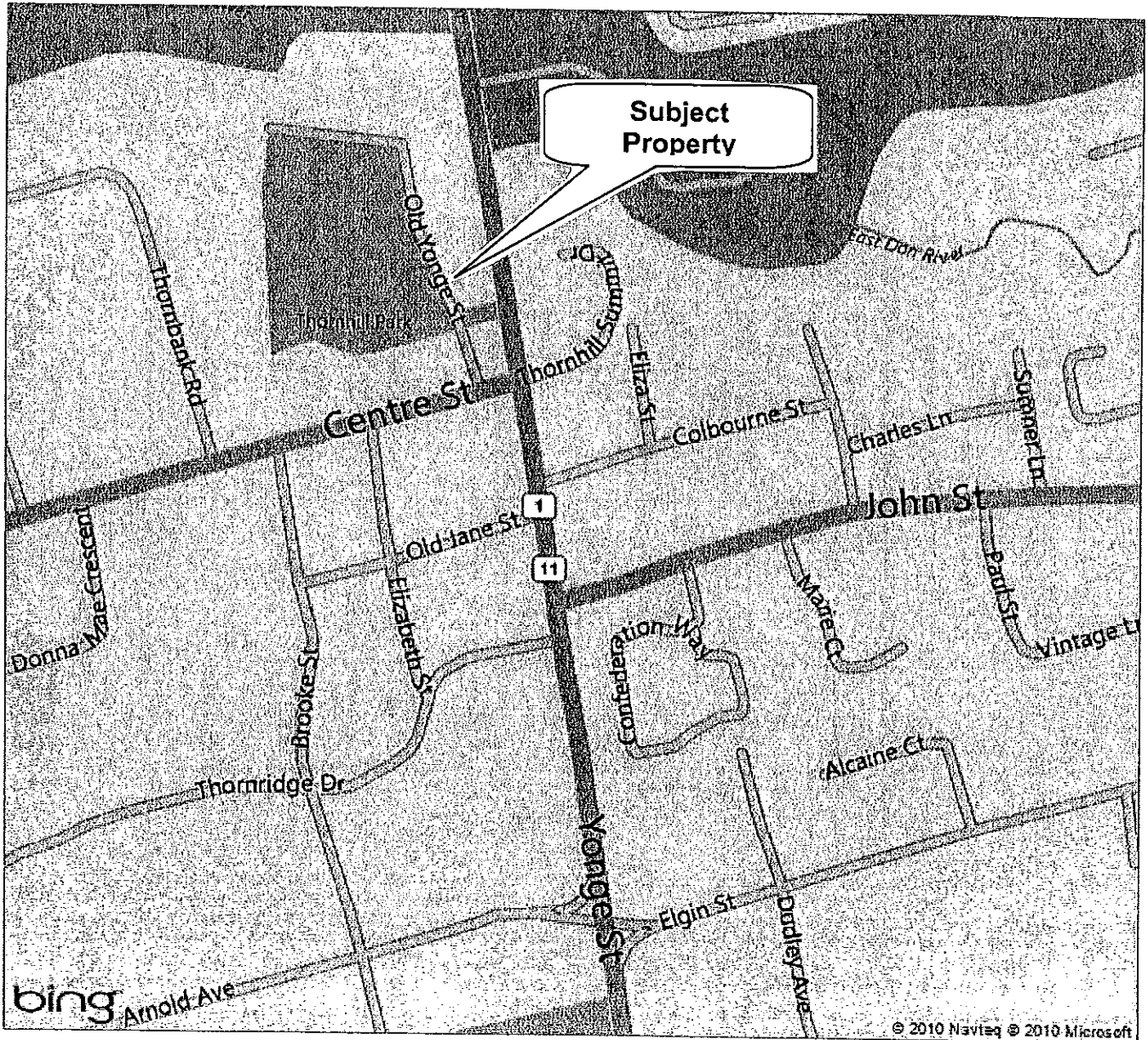
Marlon Kallideen
Commissioner of Community Services

Janice Atwood-Petkovski
Commissioner of Legal and
Administrative, City Solicitor

Location Map



HIGHWAY #7



STEELES AVENUE