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Raising the Roof favoured recipient from golf tournament

By Bill Rea

Raising the Roof could be looking at an infusion of up to $75,000 later this year through the Caledon Council Community Golf Tournament.

Town councillors, sitting on the Golf Tournament Committee Monday, favoured Raising the Roof over about nine other groups that had been in the running to be primary grant recipient from the Tournament, which will be held in the fall. The motion passed by committee, which still has to be ratified by Council, names Raising the Roof, making it eligible for up to 75 per cent of the net proceeds from the event, up to a maximum of $75,000.

The mission of Raising the Roof is to provide national leadership on long-term solutions to homelessness through partnership and collaboration. The organization is eyeing a Cedar Mills property that is owned by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) for its first Reside program, using an existing vacant building to provide supportive affordable housing. Raising the Roof is also partnering with Caledon Area Families For Inclusion (CAFFI), which is looking for supportive housing to assist families with young adult children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

According to the grant application, the money will be used for capital costs to cover renovations for the house.

Raising the Roof was requesting $75,000.

The other grant requests considered by Council included $50,000 sought by Bethell Hospice Foundation to cover operating costs to deliver and grow residential and community programs and services; $100,000 requested by Caledon Community Services (CCS) for the purchase of a new accessible wheelchair bus, along with winter tires and one-year maintenance; $50,000 sought by Caledon Seniors' Centre to cover operating costs to provide satellite programs in Caledon East, Caledon village, Inglewood, Alton and Mayfield West; $30,000 requested by Dorado Stars Swim Club to replace pool starter blocks at Mayfield Recreation Centre; $88,000 that was requested by the Great War Flying Museum at Brampton Flight Centre to pay for a hangar extension; $75,000 that was being sought by Habitat for Humanity build 10 townhouses on Kennedy Road in Southfields Village; $75,000 that National Wildlife Centre was seeking to fund the building of a wildlife hospital in Caledon; and $32,000 that the Peel Agricultural Society was seeking for new outdoor signs at the front of their property.

There were numerous complimentary comments made about several of these organizations at Monday's meeting, and councillors seemed to be going to great lengths to avoid saying anything negative.

Councillor Rob Mezzapelli stressed in the importance of funding capital projects, as opposed to covering operational costs, because that kind of funding might not be sustainable.

He also pointed out there is usually about $100,000 to be distributed after each tournament, with about $75,000 going to the primary recipient, with some of the remaining funds going as secondary grants.

?We have some large-ticket items here,? he remarked, adding he wouldn't want to see the secondary recipients getting squeezed.

Councillor Doug Beffort agreed with the need to keep some money back to help secondary recipients.

Councillor Barb Shaughnessy observed it took a lot of work to put these applications together. She wondered if some of these outfits would be eligible for Trillium grants from the Province, adding they maybe should be told there might be other sources of money.

She also voiced reluctance to sending the money to national organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity. She said groups like this have large fundraising teams. She also said the Town gave Habitat a break on development charges on its previous project in Caledon.

As well, Shaughnessy pointed out CCS has a fundraising team, as she was interested in focusing attention on a smaller organization.

She was also intrigued by the application from National Wildlife Centre.

?It's a tourism opportunity and an education opportunity,? she remarked.

?What is the benefit to the community?? Mezzapelli asked.

He also pointed to the Raising the Roof application, pointing out it's related to finding housing for young adults with disabilities.

?This is a housing stock that does not exist in Caledon,? he observed.

Mezzapelli also saw merit in the CCS application, wondering if the agency would be able to make do with $75,000 rather than the $100,000 it was seeking. He pointed out the population in Caledon is getting older, and there is a growing need for transportation services.

He also acknowledged the National Wildlife Centre is trying to address a real need in the area.

Councillor Jennifer Innis agreed there should be more emphasis on capital projects, as opposed to operational.

She expressed a certain partiality to the National Wildlife Centre application, observing they are working through TRCA to find a

site for their facility. She also pointed out they are currently operating out of two mobile units.
?It's a great organization,? she declared. ?It's something that's definitely needed.?
But she also pointed out the agency hasn't secured land yet.
?It's a chicken-and-egg scenario,? she said.
Innis also said she was drawn to the application of Raising the Roof, pointing out it's in her ward and is also working in partnership with TRCA.
?Everybody is chipping in to make this home a reality,? she observed.
Shaughnessy was concerned there wasn't more details on Raising the Roof's budget, when it comes to renovation costs.
Mayor Allan Thompson said he was impressed with the detailed application submitted by Great War Flying Museum.
?I always like to reward people for good homework,? he remarked.
He added he understood what Raise the Roof wants to do, but he too was concerned about missing details.
Councillor Johanna Downey, who was chairing the meeting, agreed all the applicants were ?very worthy,? but she personally thought the flying museum had a more fulsome application. She also pointed out school groups visit the museum, and things are cramped there.
?It's one or the other,? Innis remarked, pointing out they could support the tourism potential at the museum, or help house vulnerable people. ?I'm going to go with my heart on this one.?