

Council hears requests for grants in 2014 budget

By Bill Rea

About 20 community groups are seeking grants from the Town for next year, and the total requests are going to amount to a little more than \$90,000.

Caledon councillors received the requests at their meeting last week, as well as hearing from delegations representing several of the groups applying. Councillors will have to decide how much grant money goes where as part of the ongoing 2014 budget process. There has been a request for \$14,000 for the Canada Day celebrations held at Albion Hills Conservation Area. The Town granted \$11,000 for the event last year.

Jay Clark, supervisor at Albion Hills, told councillors the celebrations have been going on for 18 years, and there have been constant attempts to improve the festivities, including the addition of a petting zoo, pony and hay rides, reptile shows, etc. As well, they have bands as stage entertainment.

'All of that costs money and a lot of money,' he said.

Clark said they were asking for the grant to help spread the word of the celebration to all of Caledon.

He also pointed out Canada Day falls on a Tuesday in 2014, and that day of the week always seems to get crowds out.

Diane Tolstoy, representing the HomeJames program, told councillors they are seeking \$10,000 this year, up from \$7,000 last year.

She said they ask for \$10,000 every year, and pointed out that in the last four years, the program has helped people who may have consumed too much alcohol in holiday celebrating get themselves and their vehicles home safely. She said they have provided 1,254 rides over the years, getting 2,753 passengers to their destinations safely.

She also said they have new software this year to help with the dispatching process.

Tolstoy also said the format is changing this year. In the past, donations from grateful clients was donated to community youth causes. But the plan now is for the program to keep some of the contributions in the hopes of eventually making it self-sustaining.

Councillor Patti Foley said Caledon OPP has reported there are no fatalities on local roads when the program is in place in December.

'This is almost another branch of community policing,' she said.

Sandhill Pipes and Drums has approached the Town for a \$2,700 grant this year.

Pipe Major Hal Graham told councillors this is the only bagpipe band that calls Caledon home, having operated since 1962. During that time, they have been reaching out to the community, training new members locally, as well as in Brampton and Shelburne. They perform at numerous functions in the community, preserving and performing the music of the 'great highland bagpipes.'

Graham said there has been a successful relationship with the Town for more than 50 years, adding they need help now. The groups gets by on parade fees, and a lot of the parades they take part in have no fee.

The band members wear kilts that were given to the group in the 1970s. After some 40 years, 'they are beginning to be a wee bit threadbare.'

He said they need 15 kilts, which cost about \$900 apiece, adding they need three versions of each uniform per member. He said the plan is to buy five new uniforms per year for the next three years.

Mayor Marolyn Morrison said she understood how expensive kilts are, observing that she's been prevailed upon to buy them for her grandchildren.

Councillor Allan Thompson wondered if the band could be one of the beneficiaries of the annual council golf tournament.

Gordon Morton, president of the Caledon Chamber Concert series, asked for another grant of \$2,000 this year.

He told councillors this non-profit group is the only one of its kind in the Headwaters area. He added they are starting their 11th season with five performances per year. He also said that four of the five concerts for the 2014-15 season are set. He said it's the nature of programs such as this that they have to book their performers about a year in advance.

Morton said the money received from the Town helped make last season the most successful one ever. He said season ticket sales were up 20 per cent, and sales in general increased by 30 per cent.

Morrison said she's been to concerts in the series.

'They're absolutely outstanding,' she said. 'It's really very, very nice.'

The St. Andrew's Cemetery board is requesting \$9,500.

Board Trustee Don Carruthers told councillors it's a small rural cemetery which was started by pioneers, but it's also still a going concern.

'It's a very active cemetery,' he said, adding there are people in the area who are planning to rest there.

Some of the stones in the cemetery date back to the 1850s, as Carruthers called it a 'distinct part of our heritage.' He added there's no record of the cemetery receiving outside financial assistance as far as any board member can remember. It operates from plot sales, burials and donations. Maintenance is done through their own resources.

The plan in the coming year is to replace the fence along the road. Carruthers said they have found a supplier who can do the work in the existing style. He also said snow plows have been pushing snow back, putting more pressure on the fence.

Carruthers added the board can't finance the work on its own without draining its reserves.

Carruthers told Morrison they charge \$900 for one plot and \$2,250 for a family of four.

Councillor Gord McClure said he paid a lot more than that when his wife died two years ago.

Jeremy Grant appeared before council asking for a \$2,500 grant to support the Alton Millpond Hockey Tournament.

'Hockey is a passion of mine,' he told council, adding the vent which is about to see its fifth edition ties into the heritage of the mill. 'The event is evolving and changing this year.'

He added the hope this year to add more events for women and children.

'It truly has become a community event,' he said.

The grant money would be used to build a better ramp to the ice surface, to help with the preparation work to get the ice in shape and improve the signage for off-site parking.

'The community does come out,' Morrison observed. 'It's a wonderful opportunity for people to come together from all around. It's a lot of fun.'

Morrison also quipped a problem was 'when my husband cracked some ribs and broke a toe last year.'

The Alton Grange Association has put in a request for \$5,000.

Bob Maxwell told councillors the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) bought 350 acres in the area about 40 years ago. The lands had a number of environmental features, including two rivers, significant wetlands and a forested region. He added that after about 25 years, MNR realized it didn't have the resources to put its plans into motion, so a volunteer committee was brought in to help manage the property. The association now maintains the area, he said, with a set of goals to protect, restore and enhance the site.

He said they need money for things like invasive species control, boardwalk extension so people can check out the wetlands without disturbing the ground, trail maintenance, educational outreach, etc.

'It's all part of a community function,' he said, adding the site is available to all of Caledon.

Caledon Agricultural Society First Vice-President Tim Forster pushed the case for a \$5,000 grant, up from the \$4,000 they received last year.

He told councillors the society is run totally by volunteers, and tries to make sure it remains viable and relevant.

He added they have been able to add to their reserves the last couple of years, through the Snowfest in February, the annual Fair and Canada Day activities. Money has been put back into the grounds, with improvements to the wiring and the addition of seating.

Forster added one of their goals is to make the facility used more often. There is an agreement with the Town to have the grass cut more often, and there are events being held on the site, including a wedding, tack swaps and the Running of the Bulls.

McClure commented that '\$5,000 seems a bargain,' adding the Canada Day celebrations are the only ones held on the west side of town, the Fair every spring is popular and the Snowfest is well attended and educational. 'You do a really good job for the money you have.'

Other grant applications have come from the Albion and Bolton Agricultural Society for \$1,000, Caledon Community Services for \$5,000, Caledon-Dufferin Victim Services for \$5,000, Family Transition Place for \$10,000, Headwaters Arts for \$5,000, Peel 4-H Association for \$1,000, Peel Federation of Agriculture for \$5,000, Dufferin-Peel Plowman's Association for \$1,000, Peel Agricultural Society for \$1,000, Volunteer MBC for \$6,000 and the Peel Junior Farmers' 100th Anniversary Celebration for \$800.