

# ADDENDUM



---

## COMBINED MEETING OF COUNCIL MARCH 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

---

➤➤ ITEM K - ADDENDUM / ADDENDA:

E-2 General Government / *gouvernement général*

E-2 (d) Discussion re: Facility Analysis



# Sturgeon River House

MUSEUM & NATURE TRAILS  
MUSÉE & SENTIERS DE NATURE

---

Municipality of West Nipissing  
101-225 rue Holditch  
Sturgeon Falls, Ontario  
P2B 1T1

Attn: Mayor and Council

Re: Staffing at Museum

Mayor Joanne,

At our meeting Thursday March 1<sup>st</sup>, the Museum Advisory Committee agreed to recommend that a fulltime employee be hired permanently in order to help Renée-Anne, our curator, keep the museum open year round for the following reasons.

Great steps have been taken this fall and winter by the two staff members Renée-Anne Paquette and Julie Lafrenière to revitalize interest in our museum displays and programs.

First and foremost, all exhibits have been changed to reflect all facets of West Nipissing pioneers and cultures. All artifacts have been identified and labelled. The museum is also well adapted to different members of our society and is wheelchair accessible.

After detailed preparation and research, and by adding many educational components to the visits, the local schools have returned to the Museum to spend the day snowshoeing and participate in programs such as historical stories, ecological interests, nature habitat and art and crafts all organized by the personnel. These visits cannot be done successfully by one employee or by students. The staff started to see an influx in calls and bookings due to positive feedback from the community and participants sharing through networking and word of mouth, that the museum is open this winter.

Recently, as you must know, a Swedish group expressed great appreciation during their visit in January which reflected different aspects of our region. Fortunately, the museum door was open when the organizer of this trip from North Bay, went by and decided to investigate what this big building was all about. Fortunately, Renée Anne was there to explain what type of visit could be organized for them. The tourist operator was indeed impressed and will certainly bring other groups. This is just the beginning!

This fall and winter, the staff prepared and sent a variety of publicity brochures to the area campgrounds in order to increase the interest of tourists to come and visit this spring, summer and fall.

All this work takes time. These publicity brochures were also sent out to many bus tours in Ontario to promote a visit to our museum. Because of this outreach, this week a tour company from Orléans, Ontario called and is interested in organizing a visit to our museum on their way to Sudbury. Another beginning!

Staff have also reached out to many community partners to work hand in hand with other local businesses in order to keep the museum open year round. This is not just a summer operation. The trails are at their best in the winter and the experienced staff can offer not only trail tours but education, fun and physical activities. No additional equipment cost is required to offer this programming to local schools and organizations because we have snowshoes and no trails maintenance is required in the winter.

A gift shop has also been added to the museum which showcases local artists, a first in West Nipissing!

The museum also hosts many community gatherings such as Union Culturel des Femmes Franco Ontariennes every Thursday year round and Société Historique du Nipissing Ouest once a month year round. Recently the museum is working with the local art gallery to create a mural in our front entrance as well as allow local artists to display their art. The museum being open year round, gives them a better opportunity to display and sell their art as many tourists and local people are in and out of the museum due to events, programming and school tours that are offered year round.

Julie Lafrenière's contract ended this week. Based on the results during her time at the museum and the ongoing interest in the community and beyond, it becomes obvious that the museum needs two people with the skills and interest that will promote this museum year round.

Renée-Anne is the curator but she also has many other responsibilities for the Municipality and cannot be at the museum at all times. We cannot afford to close the doors when she is away. The museum needs two staff members to answer calls for bookings, organize, prepare and receive the different organizations that wish to visit. When the door is locked, no one to answer calls, people get frustrated and business will go elsewhere and will not return, and through networking, will announce to other groups that we are not open for business.

The museum is no longer a seasonal business. It has proven this.

The museum cannot be operated by students. The personnel need to be knowledgeable with museum artifacts, their use, the historical background of the article, as it relates to this community and the people who settled the region of West Nipissing. This is why we would like to see this permanent position staffed at the same level as it was in the last year. We cannot expect the museum to continue on the path it has in the last year without a staff member that can contribute at the same level as Julie has in the time she was there.

They must have a passion for their work to keep our museum interesting to visitors.

We recommend that the Municipality hire a person remunerated at a level commensurate with the required qualifications as soon as possible as there is a great deal of work now and ahead. Our museum needs to be open year round in order to succeed. Therefore, the doors must be remain open at all times and have a full time staff in order for our museum to continue its current success.

We would also like to bring to your attention that the Museum Advisory Committee will be conducting a market study seeking the public's input in our programming as well as their general interest in the museum.

Please help us in ensuring the long term sustainability of our community Museum.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite both council and senior staff members of the municipality to schedule a formal visit so that you and your senior managers may fully appreciate all of the changes and improvements to this great municipal asset.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jean-Pierre Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jean-Pierre" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Martin".

Jean-Pierre Martin, President  
Museum Advisory Committee