



Heritage Incentive Program

Planning Advisory Committee
November 21, 2023

Planning & Development Department



EAST HANTS

Background

- Beginning in April 2016, heritage property owners were able to apply for a grant to cover 50% of the costs of improvements to their heritage property, up to a maximum of \$2,000.
- Eligible applicants are all owners of municipally registered heritage properties and all owners of properties located within the Maitland Heritage Conservation District. The following are not eligible for the heritage incentive grant:
 - Government owned properties, except where the property is leased to a registered non-profit society which is partially or totally responsible for building maintenance;
 - Properties within the Maitland Heritage Conservation District that were built in 1940 or later; and
 - Properties which are assessed entirely for commercial purposes under the Assessment Act of Nova Scotia, unless the property is owned by a registered non-profit society.

Background

- From 2016 to March 2023 a total of 31 heritage incentive grants have been provided. Just over 50% of the grants (total 16) have been given to community groups/not-for-profit/churches. Almost \$60,000 has been provided to heritage property owners during this time period.
- The majority of the grants have been for work to properties in or nearby the community of Maitland which is due to the large concentration of heritage properties in this area.
- Between 2016 and March 2023 grants have been awarded for the following work:
 - Re-painting - 8 grants
 - Repair or new roofing material - 12 grants
 - Windows - 8 grants
 - One each for (a) work to the foundation, (b) headstone cleaning, and (c) professional study.



New roof - East Noel Heritage School House



The painting of the church at 1231 Highway 1, Lakelands.



Painting - Anglican Church, Maitland.



painting of the Lower Selma Museum.

Jurisdictional Scan

- As can be seen from the jurisdictional scan in the staff report there are a variety of financial amounts offered by the four different municipalities:
- HRM offers varying amounts with up to \$50,000 for properties in two of their conservation districts and \$15,000/\$25,000 for other heritage properties.
- CBRM offers up to \$12,000 or \$6,000 for work relating to a roof.
- The District of Yarmouth offer a rebate which does not need to be matched and is up to \$1,000 per year for 5 years.
- Further details of these grants are included in the staff report.

Proposed Amendments to the Program

Financial Incentive Amount

- A financial incentive is a monetary benefit offered to encourage behaviour or actions which otherwise would not take place. Except for the 2022/23 fiscal year, the Heritage Incentive Program has not maxed out the amount budgeted, all other years there has been remaining money in the budget.
- Staff consider that \$2,000 may not provide enough of an incentive to encourage owners of heritage properties to undertake maintenance work they were not already considering to undertake.
- The cost of maintaining all types of buildings has increased significantly since 2016 (23% - see staff report for details) and maintaining heritage buildings can also often be more expensive than non-heritage buildings due to the types of materials being used and the maintenance needs of those materials.

Proposed Amendments to the Program

Financial Incentive Amount

- Staff recommend that the financial incentive be increased from \$2,000 to \$5,000 per property owner.
- If Council approve this change, the draft budget for 2024/25 will include an increase from \$12,000 to \$30,000 which will enable 6 grants at the maximum amount of \$5,000 be provided.
- At budget consideration time Council may decide not to increase the budget for this program and any outcome on this report does not prejudice the Council consideration of the budget.

Proposed Amendments to the Program

Commercial Buildings

- The Heritage Incentive Program currently excludes properties which are taxed entirely for commercial purposes. Commercial property owners experience the same challenges to maintaining their property as residential property owners. Staff recommend expanding the incentive program to include commercial properties.
- The intent of the Heritage Incentive Program is to improve the built heritage and expanding the program to include commercial properties will increase the potential for this goal to be achieved. For example, the Frieze and Roy store in Maitland is one of the most prominent buildings in this community but is currently ineligible.
- As can be noted from the jurisdictional scan this is an approach taken in HRM, CBRM and the District of Yarmouth. In HRM the Heritage Incentive Program provides \$25,000 to commercial property owners compared to \$15,000 to residential property owners.

Alternatives

- Planning Advisory Committee, acting as Heritage Advisory Committee, could decide to recommend approval to either increase to the amount of grant offered or enable the inclusion of the commercial properties into the program.
- A second alternative is to continue with the status-quo and not amend the current incentive program.

Recommendation

That changes be made to the heritage incentive program to increase the maximum amount of grant from \$2,000 to \$5,000 and to enable commercial properties to be eligible.

Recommended Motions

To be considered at the November 21, 2023 Policy Meeting:

Move that the Planning Advisory Committee, acting as Heritage Advisory Committee, recommend to Council, that Council gives notice of intent to approve the amendments to the Heritage Incentive Program Policy as outlined in the staff report dated November 8, 2023.

To be considered at the November 29, 2023 Regular Meeting of Council:

Move that the Planning Advisory Committee, acting as Heritage Advisory Committee, recommend to Council, that Council approves the amendments to the Heritage Incentive Program Policy as outlined in the staff report dated November 8, 2023. .