



**Subject:** *Beautification Grant Funding Review*  
**To:** Corporate & Residential Services Committee  
**Date Prepared:** April 8, 2024  
**Related Motions:** C24(99)  
**Prepared by:** Sheralee Mitchell-MacEwan, Assistant Municipal Clerk  
**Approved by:** Kim Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer

### Summary

At the March 27, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council, Motion C24(99) was approved:  
*“That Staff review the guidelines for beautification grants to expand what the beautification funds can be spent on, in particular for repairs for non-profit heritage buildings like churches”.*

Specifically, the Union Church, 283 Etter Road in Mt. Uniacke, built in 1831 requires funding. The 2024 project is a new roof which was significantly damaged during a storm last fall. They also have plans to replace the main door and complete electrical upgrades in the future. The Union Church is a registered municipal heritage property. The roof project requires funding support greater than \$5,000 permitted under Heritage Incentive Program Policy and requires a 50% contribution from the property owner. The Uniacke Union Church Trustee Association manages the property and has an active registration with NS Joint Stocks.

Districts 8 and 9 have an accumulation of unspent funds in the Beautification Reserve Fund. There are limited applicants and projects in the area, unlike other districts. There is interest in using those funds for other enhancement type projects.

### Financial Impact Statement

Beautification grants are allocated \$2,000/year by district with an additional \$1,000 to be allocated after the October 2024 municipal election. Any unspent funds accumulate in a Beautification Reserve Fund for each district. Future draft Operating Budgets will include an annual allotment of \$3,000 as directed by Council recently.

As of April 5, 2024 (not including any applications that may still be in process), the balances by district are as follows:

District	Available Funds
1	\$ 3166.00
2	\$ 2504.26
3	\$ 2758.66
4	\$ 5400.00
5	\$ 4347.28
6	\$ 3314.08
7	\$ 900.00
8	\$17 356.67
9	\$13 662.54
10	\$ 4518.78
11	\$ 7379.91

Note: The Community Beautification/Enhancement Grant Policy will require an update to note the new \$3,000 annual allocation at a future meeting.

## Recommendation

Staff recommend Option #1.

## Recommended Motion

*Move that the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommends to Council that Council directs staff to facilitate a grant under the Heritage Incentive Program Policy for the Uniacke Union Church Trustees Association for \$5000, if criteria are met; And that, Council also approves use of Beautification Grant Reserve funds from District 8 for \$5000 and District 9 for \$12,000 to fund the Union Church roof project.*

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## Background

The Union Church, built in 1831, requires funding for a new roof this year. The church has community heritage value and is managed by the Uniacke Union Church Trustees Association. The building is currently not being used; as it requires the roof repairs, door replacement and electrical upgrades. It currently has no power of its own; and when needed, a neighbour provides power. They plan to work with Nova Scotia Power to establish their own power following future electrical upgrades.

The ultimate goal of the association is to save this historical building and make it available for community purposes, ie. mini-museum, weddings, events, meetings, activities for all ages, etc.

The association is seeking **\$22,000 plus tax** for the roof project to be completed this year. They have quotes they can provide.

There is interest in allocating beautification funds to help support this project.

There are several grant policies and options that need to be considered.

### Community Beautification/Enhancement Grant Policy

The current Community Beautification/Enhancement Grant Policy was approved in 2017 with the purpose to financially support non-profit community-based beautification and enhancement efforts.

These grants are initiated by the district Councillors who are free to award their allocated grant monies, in whole or in part, to any community organizational effort that meets the guidelines.

#### Approved Uses:

- Grass cutting/mowing
- Brush cutting
- Landscaping
- Planting of shrubs/trees/flowers
- Signage
- Garbage clean up
- Other uses which fall under the intent of community beautification/enhancement, as determined appropriate by the district Councillor

#### Non-Eligible Expenditures:

- Property repairs and maintenance
- Work on real property not owned by a non-profit group or public property

### Heritage Property Incentive Program

The Heritage Property Incentive Program was introduced in 2016 and helps heritage property owners' complete improvements to the exterior of their buildings including the replacement of roof shingles, windows and exterior painting.

#### Eligibility Criteria:

- Municipally-registered heritage properties and properties located in the Maitland Heritage Conservation District (built in 1940 or later) are eligible for the program
- The incentive covers 50% of the cost of repairs or renovations (exclusive of HST) to the exterior of the building up to a maximum of \$5,000 per property. Funding availability is subject to the capacity of the budget for this program
- In addition to work to the exterior of the building, work that is necessary to ensure the long-term viability of a structure (repairs to the foundation, beams or trusses, or repairs to address significant storm water infiltration problems) may be considered
- Architectural, engineering and other consulting fees are eligible for funding (consultants may have to supply proof of professional qualifications to the Municipality)

#### Municipal Grant Program Policy:

The Municipal Grant Program Policy is the overarching policy that includes all municipal grants that collectively support the Strategic Plan. This policy is the framework by which municipal grants will be applied for, reviewed and awarded. Sections of special interest are:

##### Section 3.3

Grant applicants are encouraged to seek other sources of funding so that the municipality is not the sole source of project funding. The municipality encourages organizations to create long-term funding sustainability plans suitable to their initiative. In certain cases, the municipality may make contributions contingent on other levels of government or external support.

##### Section 3.9

The amount of the grant award should consider the level of risk being assumed by the municipality as a result of funding an activity or asset with a grant.

##### Section 3.12

When providing a stand-alone grant greater than \$10,000 that is not supported by a specific grant program, the municipality will consider entering into a grant agreement with the grant recipient. This CAO has the authority to authorize grant agreements once Council has determined a funding request.

##### Section 3.18 (added in 2022)

Religious based organizations are eligible to apply for Municipal Grants when seeking to provide a community space or program that can be used by individuals outside of the religious group. Municipal grants cannot be used for religious education or to build, expand, repair, or renovate a religious sanctuary. Owners of registered heritage buildings that are used for religious purposes can apply for a grant through the Heritage Incentive Program, however.

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## Options

### Option 1 (Recommended):

Direct staff to facilitate a grant under the Heritage Incentive Program Policy and use Beautification Grant funds to allow a contribution greater than the program typically contributes. Should Uniacke Union Church Trustees

Association not be able to fund 50% of the project, the Community Beautification/Enhancement Grant could cover additional costs to a maximum deemed appropriate by Council. Council has made exceptions to grant policies in the past and would not be precedent setting.

***Move that the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommends to Council that Council directs staff to facilitate a grant under the Heritage Incentive Program Policy for the Uniacke Union Church Trustees Association for \$5000, if criteria are met; And that, Council also approves use of Beautification Grant Reserve funds from District 8 for \$5000 and District 9 for \$12,000 to fund the Union Church roof project.***

#### Option 2 (Alternative):

Council may make a motion for an exception to the Community Beautification/Enhancement Grant Policy and Municipal Grant Program Policy and/or consider the request in keeping with the current approved use or “other uses which fall under the intent of community/enhancement, as determined appropriate by the district Councillor”. Council has made exceptions to grant policies in the past and would not be precedent setting.

***Move that the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommends to Council that Council approves a one-time grant to the Uniacke Union Church Trustees Association for the Union Church roof project to be funded from District(s) (TBD) Beautification Grant Reserve funds in the amount of (TBD).***

#### Option 3 (Not recommended):

Committee could direct staff to prepare a report with policy changes that may impact the Community Beautification/Enhancement Grant Policy, Heritage Property Incentive Program Policy and the Municipal Grant Program Policy.

This option would be precedent setting and could potentially result in unintended applications.

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## Attachments

Community Beautification/Enhancement Grant Policy  
Heritage Incentive Program Policy  
Municipal Grant Program Policy