

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 2021

13/01/2021 Cornwall Freeholder Cornwall Street Cornwall

Cornwall to Review Costs of Moving Locomotive Number 17 Within 2021 Budget

Cornwall Ontario - The future of locomotive number 17 took another turn towards a conclusion on Monday.

For the most part, council is in favour of a motion presented by Coun. Elaine MacDonald, which asks administration to create a report shedding light on the locomotive's history as well as the overall cost of moving it to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smiths Falls.

The railway museum has twice expressed its interest in acquiring Cornwall's locomotive 17.

A museum official said last month that if the museum was to receive the engine, it would be preserved and stabilized, but not restored to working order.

In addition, he also shared the museum was not currently financially capable of transporting the locomotive.

If the museum is to receive it, someone else would have to cover the transportation bill.

MacDonald, who has expressed her willingness to donate the locomotive to the museum, was hopeful the requested report could be received prior to 2021 budget discussions coming to and end.

It wouldn't be included in the first draft of the budget, as Coun. Justin Towndale tweeted Wednesday the draft budget is now in council members' hands.

"I think that this issue is something that has plagued us for years, and I think that it's time that we move because unfortunately, although we can delay, the locomotive is suffering the effects of time and it is decaying before our eyes," MacDonald said on Monday.

"Although we pay lip service to the value of our industrial heritage, we have never demonstrated the will to actually act out on it and right now."

Coun. Syd Gardiner said perhaps the land on which the locomotive sits on, on the corner of Ninth Street and Brookdale Avenue, could be sold to a local business owner who needs parking space.

"That was the other reason why I wanted it out of there," he said.

Administration however made it clear that having a report ready by 25 Jan 2021, Cornwall city council's next meeting, would be unlikely.

Instead, the report will be presented to council during budget deliberations which are set to begin in February.

That, sat well with three councillors who voted against MacDonald's motion, Couns. Dean Hollingsworth, Towndale, and Maurice Dupelle.

"I am not a real champion of getting rid of any heritage," said Hollingsworth.

"Let's face it, the old cliché was that if you wanted to get rid of a building in Cornwall, just put a heritage designation on it. We've gotten rid of enough as it is. I'd rather pursue other avenues."

Towndale on the other hand outlined he fully intends, during budget time, on debating why the city should keep the locomotive.

"This locomotive happens to be on the register of the Ontario Heritage Trust and it happens to be one of only two properties in the entire city on it, the other being the Cornwall Public Library," he said.

"I find it interesting that in 2006 I believe, the city thought enough of the locomotive to voluntarily name it to the list of the register and yet now we're thinking of getting rid of it.

"Maybe now we'll have one location that is designated throughout the city."

The city set aside \$100,000 in 2017 to cover a portion of any restoration and moving costs, which was acknowledged to be insufficient to complete the work.

Council is having this discussion again because during a review in December of reserve funds, Coun. Eric Bergeron asked why that amount was still sitting unused and that it be tabled as part of budget discussions.

04/02/2021 Cornwall Freeholder Cornwall Street

Cornwall council bids farewell to Locomotive No. 17

Cornwall's Locomotive No. 17 will not be staying in the city.

Coun. Elaine MacDonald's motion to have the behemoth transported to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smiths Falls - at the City of Cornwall's expense - narrowly passed 6-5 on Tuesday.

The museum had reached out to the city last year, expressing its interest in acquiring the locomotive if Cornwall council did not wish to keep it.

Bill de Wit, the city's division manager for municipal works, told council that moving the locomotive will more than likely cost about \$50,000. That amount was provided to de Wit from a moving company representative.

"The problem is of course that it is an oversized unit and it weighs 75 tons," he said. "It will take a crane to put it up on a low flat-bed truck."

de Wit also told council the locomotive being as high as it is, does not meet Ministry of Transportation specifications for height. A police escort would therefore be needed to move the locomotive, as well as the lifting of wires along the way. According to him, a survey undertaken by the city a few years back showed that the majority of residents polled supported having the locomotive moved to Lamoureux Park - specifically at the corner of Newsy Lalonde Way and Water Street. This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

"There were a lot of issues that came about," he said. "There were concerns about security to which we said we could bring electricity for lights. That added cost. Then there were issues about liability, so then there was discussion about putting up a fence. Then there was also accessibility."

The issue of what to do with the locomotive sharply divided council, with some councillors saying getting rid of it would be akin to erasing another piece of Cornwall's history.

"When you keep getting rid of these historical reference points, you lose some of your history," said Coun. Dean Hollingsworth. "The Capital Theatre only rests in the minds of us who are still young enough who remember going there. If you talk to someone under the age of 45, they have no concept of what we are talking about."

"I am not prepared to give it away."

Others, such as MacDonald and Coun. Syd Gardiner argued there was insufficient support from local groups who wished to save the locomotive.

"It's come to a point where no one is doing anything about it," said Gardiner. "It's just been sitting there and rotting for the past 15 years and nothing has been done about it."

Coun. Justin Towndale said he had been in contact with an SDG resident who offered to restore the locomotive for about \$100,000. The man in question, according to Towndale, specializes in antique car restoration and wanted to keep the locomotive in Cornwall.

de Wit, along with Mark Boileau, the city's general manager of planning, development and recreation, confirmed much of the land on which the locomotive sits is owned by the city and could subsequently be sold.

Cornwall Mayor Bernadette Clement voted against MacDonald's motion, saying she couldn't vote for getting rid of the locomotive and having to pay \$50,000 to do so.

VIA Rail Collision

Cornwall Ontario - Traffic is closed from Vincent Massey to Power Dam as of 16:41.

The single car collision involved the car and a VIA Rail train.

It was reported that because the train hit the vehicle towards the rear the driver survived the collision.

A helicopter was reported to be unavailable so the driver was transported to Hospital in Ottawa via ambulance.

20/02/2021 Cornwall Freeholder Cornwall Street

Locomotive Number 17's Next Stop Should be Benson Centre

Cornwall Ontario - Keep locomotive number 17 local, and off any express route out of Cornwall.

That's the message being delivered loud and clear by some of the city's leading heritage experts, in a detailed letter this week to the mayor, council, and city, titled "Engine 17: A Sad Story of Neglect".

In the letter, prepared by Wes Libbey, the group says the Benson Centre is the "perfect location to set up a "Cornwall: Industrial and Innovation Past" interactive centre.

There is a lot of down time for parents and families between games and while the children are practicing, an interactive display will offer them a new place to go and learn about Cornwall.

"Engine 17 worked in the Domtar yard (near the Benson Centre location)," reads the letter.

"It is time to bring it home!"

Earlier this month, Cornwall council decided locomotive 17 will be making tracks, a 6-5 vote on a motion to have it transported to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smiths Falls.

City staff told council that moving the engine to its next stop will cost about \$50,000.

But historians want to derail that plan, and in a five page treatise delivered to city leaders, Libbey and others wrote that the city should locate engine 17 "as the focal point to highlight our industrial history", and that the location should be the community hub that is the Benson Centre, "it's the busiest location in Cornwall, attracting over 100,000 people every year. It is a place where all age groups meet. The Cornwall Street Railway (CSR) story, Cornwall's economic story, needs to be told, and it cannot be contained on a plaque," reads the letter.

Contributors to the letter were Lily Worrall, president of the SD&G Historical Society, Jean-Yves Lemoine, senior curator Cornwall Community Museum, Chris Granger, former member Heritage-Patrimoine Cornwall, and Carole Libbey treasurer Heritage-Patrimoine Cornwall.

They say in the first section of the letter, "Engine 17: Why It Matters, that Cornwall owes its success in no small way to the (CSR)."

The letter is rich in historical detail and details economic activity in the city going back to the early 19th century, contributors say Cornwall was an industrial and innovation beacon in the late 1880s, that "people, inventors, and investors travelled from far and wide to visit (Cornwall), the cradle of technology in Canada. Yet we basically have nothing remaining of that era. All factories have been demolished or transformed into condominiums and stores. The visual past has almost been erased from memory."

The group says "an interactive display with Locomotive 17 at its centre will rekindle curiosity, improve and preserve the knowledge of our industrial and innovative past."

To save Locomotive 17, the contributors say, council must vote against the repeal of the historic designation.

Earlier this month it was reported that the museum had reached out to the city last year, expressing its interest in acquiring the locomotive if Cornwall council did not wish to keep it.

And in a survey conducted by the city several years ago, a majority of residents polled supported having the locomotive moved to Lamoureux Park, specifically at the corner of Newsy Lalonde Way and Water Street.

The locomotive is currently located just north of the Brookdale traffic circle, near Ninth Street, all but ignored, ironically, while situated very close to another city hub, the Walmart Supercentre.

The issue of what to do with the locomotive had sharply divided council, with some councillors saying getting rid of it would be akin to erasing another piece of Cornwall's history.

But others said there was insufficient support from local groups who wished to save the locomotive.

CORNWALL -- The city of Cornwall has decided to donate a piece of its rail history to another town.

On Feb. 3, Cornwall council endorsed a motion from Coun. Elaine MacDonald to move Locomotive 17, which sits in a state of neglect at the corner of Ninth Street and Brookdale Avenue, to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smiths Falls.

An original motion brought forward in 2019 on the same issue was defeated.

"There was a really good suggestion that was we should give it a year to see if people could fundraise and I thought that was wonderful," said MacDonald, at the site of the locomotive. "But a year on in, there hadn't been any fundraising."

"There wasn't any massive popular movement and meanwhile you can stop the clock on these things but you can't stop time. So you see what's been happening to this locomotive through all these years of neglect," MacDonald said.

In 2016, the estimate to restore the locomotive was in the range of \$100,000.

The cost to move the train to Smiths Falls will cost approximately \$50,000, with the money coming from city reserves. That money will be paid back next year.

"Smiths Falls has such a wonderful museum that will give it a wonderful home," MacDonald said. "They have proved themselves to be regional thinkers too, because when the Brockville Museum lost their bell a few years ago to theft, it was the Smiths Falls museum who donated them a bell. So, I think this kind of synergy is excellent to foster in our region, so I am happy our little locomotive is going to be part of that."

Some Cornwall residents believe the locomotive should stay in the city, since it's the last remaining item from the Cornwall Street Railway.

"Well I believe the engine really belongs in Cornwall. It was part of the history of the Cornwall Street Railway that made Cornwall what it is today," said Wes Libbery, former president of the SD&G Historical Society.

"That's why Cornwall grew as much as it did and then when they sold the proceeds of the Cornwall Street Railway for \$67 million, they had enough money to pay off their debts and support all the rest of the industry."

Libbery and others from the local heritage group sent a five page letter to the city saying the engine should be saved and moved to the nearby Benson Centre.

"Where people come for sporting events, they have time to study our history, learn of our history," Libbery said. "It's the highest traffic area in Cornwall and it can be protected and watched over there."

When asked about the proposal, MacDonald said that idea was never brought forward to council.

"The city had the money in their budget, the ball was in their court," Libbery added. "And it just became an orphan, which is too bad but now that they've triggered the thing, I think it's time for us to remind them its time to fix it up and keep it here."

"What I have heard is some regret," said MacDonald. "Especially from some people in the heritage committee. We all realize that we missed an opportunity here but frankly at the end of the day I think we've come up with something better."

In Smiths Falls, 140 kilometres east of Cornwall, the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario is excited to have a new piece for its collection.

"We were ecstatic," said Tony Humphrey, president of the board of trustees for the museum. "We are going to refurbish it the best we can. The engine has been terribly neglected. It's been vandalized."

Humphrey said some rail lines in the U.S. still use the Baldwin Steeple-Cab Electric Engine like Locomotive 17 and members are already reaching out to look for parts.

"These were very green engines by the way. They were not dirty old diesels. They were electric and they ran up and down delivering boxcars around the city of Cornwall," Humphrey said.

"We are going to stabilize it, paint it as it was in Cornwall," he added. "Actually, the city of Cornwall has the original decals that are going to go on the side of it. They have the bell too, so our volunteers are just cracking to get at it."

Humphrey said it will likely cost a few dollars to refurbish the engine and the group is actively looking for donors. The museum hopes the locomotive will be ready for display by 2023.

"We are the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario, so of course this is in our base, Cornwall of course," Humphrey said. "We're in 2021. In 2050, in 2075 that locomotive will still be sitting here in a permanent location and it will be part of the rich history of Cornwall and people from Cornwall, from the area, will be able to come and see it and not just see it but be able to get up and walk through it."

"It's going to be in good hands and it's better than the other option. That other option scares me, when we heard the scrapping thing," Humphrey added.

"I wish the city of Cornwall had a permanent secure location for it. That's unfortunate they don't but it will be in good hands here."

"I hope that people from Cornwall will visit there because our city is going to be mentioned, in fact we will be honoured as being the donors," said MacDonald.

"I really appreciate the fact that the Smiths Falls museum reached out to us and offered to give the locomotive a home. This is so much better than what the alternative could be."

12/03/2021 OKthePK

Lachute

Masson

Station Crushed by Snow Load

Masson Quebec - Built in 1877, prior to takeover by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP), Buckingham Junction station at Masson, Quebec, on CP's Lachute Subdivision collapsed due to a heavy snow buildup.

The station was added to the list of Canadian Designated Heritage Railway Stations in 1993.

However, that obviously didn't come with any funds to restore the structure.

Now it appears far too late to restore it.

14/04/2021 CBC News

Chalk River

Pembroke

Historic Stone Archway Collapses After Locals Spent Years Trying to Save it

Pembroke Ontario - A stone culvert archway built back in the 1800s under a former railway partially collapsed earlier this week, disappointing many who were hoping the province would do something to prevent its destruction.

The structure of carved rock was originally built to allow a stream to flow under the Gibson rail bed in Pembroke, near Woodstock.

In recent years the archway had become a favourite destination for hikers, photographers, and even wedding parties looking for a unique photographic background.

But after standing for more than a century, the arch was crumbling, and locals pleaded with the province to take steps to restore it.

"It makes me feel really sad and disappointed in the fact that there was hope there in getting it done," said Tammy McLean, an amateur historian.

"But now the hope is gone."

Less than 24 hours after part of the archway caved in, construction crews were on the scene digging up the culvert under the supervision of the Department of Natural Resources.

The collapse resulted in the closure of the Wolastoq Valley walking trail while excavators and dump trucks began work.

"The Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development is aware of the washout near the Northampton Culvert. Staff have been on the scene to ensure that the area is safe and secure. We will continue to monitor the situation closely," said department spokesperson Nick Brown in a statement to CBC News.

The province hasn't said what plans it has to replace the archway, but McLean says construction crews told her they're digging out the old granite stones and will put in a regular steel culvert.

McLean, who was taking photos of the construction, hopes to be able to take home one of the stones for herself to preserve the memory of the arch.

"It's a sad scene because I try to preserve history. Because if you don't preserve history, you have nothing," said McLean.