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“The design is done,” Letham said, “and the refresh is long overdue.” Photo: Geoff Coleman.

Downtown Fenelon Falls to get major face lift

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Downtown Fenelon Falls was the main beneficiary in the decision by council not to refund to taxpayers the 2019 budget surplus of nearly \$3 million. The money was

instead put in capital reserves to be spent on pandemic recovery, and spent on a major structural and cosmetic facelift of downtown Fenelon Falls.

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The council unanimously voted to use \$2.7 million of the \$3 million in capital reserves set aside for pandemic recovery to redevelop the downtown core of the popular tourist destination, with an addition \$1.3 million in city public works money to rebuild the water and sewer system in the downtown core while the roads are being excavated and improved.



COUNCILLOR DOUG ELMSLIE.

Councillor Doug Elmslie, who represents Fenelon Falls, said the “decisions were a long time coming” and that this project first proposed in 2012 is the result of “local citizens who have worked long and hard to see this project come to fruition.”

“When the conversation first started,” Elmslie shared, “the community had to make a choice between a community centre or downtown redevelopment and re-development won out.”

“The consultants’ report is done. The traffic flow report is done. We have studied the Fenelon Falls downtown to death and it is time to act and move forward,” Elmslie said.

“We have water and waste water issues,” Elmslie continued, “and Fenelon Falls has done everything they were supposed to do to see this project move forward.”

“It would be a grave injustice if we don’t act on this project,” Elmslie told his fellow councillors.

The Fenelon downtown revitalization

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project follows on the heels of a very successful upgrading of both the Bobcaygeon and Lindsay downtowns with the Lindsay project more than halfway done. There is an expectation when the construction is complete in Fenelon that downtown Omemee will be in line for some major attention from the city.

Mayor Andy Letham endorsed the Fenelon project whole heartedly saying these kinds of makeovers “give the city the biggest bang for its buck.”

“The design is done,” Letham said, “and the refresh is long overdue.”

“There are a lot of pretty amazing people in Fenelon, and we have strong partnerships with the people of Fenelon Falls,” Letham

added, “and projects like this will benefit the whole city.”

Councillor Kathleen Seymour-Fagan also unconditionally endorsed the Fenelon Falls project saying, “This is a good project. It is investment in a tourist downtown. The Fenelon downtown is tired. This will be a boost to the whole city.”

Elmslie was also very happy that the revitalization of downtown Fenelon Falls would see the replacement of the water and sewer infrastructure beneath Colborne Street which “would help solve many problems with water and wastewater and would hopefully eliminate the dumps of raw sewage into Fenelon River.”

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