

Queen's Hotel mural

The 1996 mural agreement is rescinded in an October 7, 2003 Cramahe Council resolution moved by Councillor Mike Johnston and seconded by then Deputy-Mayor Dekeyser.

The resolution which is titled "Tim Gilligan's (Queen's Hotel) Counter Proposal re Mural" states that Council is rescinding any previous agreement and is entering a new agreement with Mr. Gilligan. This new agreement stipulates that the Township will cover the cost of painting the complete exterior of the Queen's Hotel, and plastering of the west wall on which the mural is painted. The resolution states the work will be completed in the Spring of 2004. Mr. Gilligan is responsible for overseeing the work of contractors but not approving them.

There is no record of a Township proposal, only "Tim Gilligan's counter proposal".

Two records in the Township files relate to the resolution. One is a letter from Cramahe CAO Merlin Dewing, explaining the resolution. There is no staff report which preceded the resolution which might explain why Council agreed to paint the entire building.

The only other public record which relates to the issue is a directive from Cramahe Council on Sept. 17, 2003 to CAO, Merlin Dewing to negotiate with Mr. Gilligan to resolve the mural issue.

Former Mayor, Jim Williams stated last month that he could not recall why the Township entered into the 2003 agreement, but offered that Council may have decided to get out of the responsibility of repairing the mural. It might be cheaper to paint the other three walls and get out of the original agreement.

Lee Dekeyser, the seconder of the October 7 motion, refused to make any statement about that agreement, claiming it was in the hands of Mr. Hustler.

Former Cramahe Township reeve Stu Oliver says the October resolution is all a mistake. He claims to have a legal opinion which states that, prior to October 7, 2003, the Township could have stepped in at any time and sandblasted the wall, removing the mural and Council's responsibility to maintain it.

Contracting quoted approximately \$140,000. The contractors proposed two different methods of completing the work. Mr. Gilligan did not agree to the method proposed in the cheaper one.

In August, 2004 Council delayed making any decision to go ahead with the work.

At the August 13, 2004 meeting of Cramahe Council Mayor Lee Dekeyser admitted, when questioned, that quotations had been asked for by the Township. "We didn't agree with them," said the Mayor at the time.

The delay may have been because Mr. Benny Piccattoli offered on August 23, 2004 to stone face and aluminum side the mural wall for \$21,763 - a saving of about \$27,000 over the only other bid acceptable to Mr. Gilligan.

After being contacted by Council Mr. Piccattoli added an offer on September 3 to paint the remaining three walls for a further \$6,285. Mr. Gilligan appears to be in favour of this idea.

One document which cannot be traced to any open meeting of Council is an August 31, 2004 resolution of Council, and signed by the Mayor and Mr. Gilligan. It states that the Township will cover the costs of siding the mural wall and painting the other three walls with two coats of paint. It also releases the parties from the 1996 agreement.

The agreement precedes a resolution of Councillor Marc Coombs moved on September 21, 2004 to seek tenders to paint the three walls.

Prior to the September 7 meeting of Council the higher quote was not on the public record as the decision to seek quotes and the discussion of the two quotes received at that time, were done at separate in camera meetings.

Two weeks later, Mr. Piccattoli backed out of his offer to paint the three walls. No decision was made by Council.

In its meeting on September 20, 2004, the Heritage Committee jumped into the debate, agreeing that siding the west wall of the Queen's was not a valid solution.

The heritage group felt that siding would hide the real problem, which is moisture in the brick. Covering the brick will ultimately contribute to the

In February, 2004 Council got a quote for budget purposes only. It suggested that the cost of painting four walls would be between \$14,500 and \$17,000.

In July, 2004, Cramahe Parks and recreation Director, Ken Wood, was directed by Council to get quotes for the work agreed to in 2003. Mr. Wood explained in an interview on May 16, 2005 that Council did not put out a notice for tender at that time as it felt that the quotes would be under the \$20,000 minimum that requires Council to seek public tenders.

He sent out requests to six contractors. He got two quotes back.

The difference between the two responses was extraordinary. A+ Painting quoted \$14,000. Willby

destruction of one of Colborne's heritage buildings and compromise the King St. streetscape in the opinion of the group.

Sometime in September, 2004, artist Berg Johnson resurfaced and Council had to refer back to the 1996 agreement. On the advice of the Township lawyer, in January, 2005 Council asked Mr. Berg to sign off the original deal. There was no answer from the artist until March when he signed off.

On May 3, 2005 Council issued a notice for tenders to side the west wall and paint the other three. No bids were received. And the matter is now in the hands of the Township lawyer.

Council has set \$35,000 aside in the 2005 budget for the work.