



AMHERST TOWN COUNCIL

RFD# 2018140

Date: October 22, 2018

TO: Mayor Kogon and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Rebecca Taylor, Business Development Officer

DATE: October 22, 2018

SUBJECT: Gritty to Pretty Beautification Program

ORIGIN: Recommendations in *Centre First: Downtown Amherst Action Strategy*, suggestions in the tourism assessment of the Northumberland Shore by Destination Development International (Roger Brooks), and a new Beautification and Streetscaping Program funding opportunity from Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA Section 65 (m): *The council may expend money required by the municipality for promotion and attraction of institutions, industries and businesses, the stabilization and expansion of employment opportunities and the economic development of the municipality; and Section 47(5) The council may make and carry out a contract, perform an act, do any thing or provide a service for which the municipality or the council is authorized by an Act of the Legislature to spend or borrow money*

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve the Gritty to Pretty Beautification Program and authorize staff to enter into the attached MOU with the Amherst & Area Chamber of Commerce.

BACKGROUND: The DMA's Beautification and Streetscaping Program is designed to support the development of attractive and inviting areas where visitors are enticed to spend money in a municipality. Key investments can rejuvenate areas, foster local pride, encourage economic development and enhance the character of municipalities.

Several commercial properties in Amherst could benefit from improvements to facades, signage, and exterior lighting. These improvements would enhance Amherst's tourism development.

DISCUSSION: An application for funding was submitted to the Department of Municipal Affairs to establish a program in Amherst that would offer grants for commercial property beautification and streetscaping projects, up to 50% of eligible expenses, to a maximum of \$5,000 per property. The Town of Amherst has been approved for \$25,000 grant. The DMA requires grant funding to be distributed through a partner organization and the Amherst & Area Chamber of Commerce is willing to administer the grant application, approval, and disbursement process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no financial implications for the Town of Amherst, as the funding will be received by the Town and then disbursed to the partner organization.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Commercial property owners throughout Amherst were contacted through the process to determine an interest in participating. The Amherst & Area Chamber of Commerce and the Amherst Area Heritage Trust were consulted and are supportive of the concept.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: All work done through the program must comply with any applicable municipal, provincial, and federal environmental regulations.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Gritty to Pretty Program.
2. Do not approve the Gritty to Pretty Program.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Memorandum of Understanding
2. Proposed Design Guidelines & Information Package

Report prepared by: Rebecca Taylor, Business Development Officer
Report and Financial approved by: