

**Presentation to Council by Ken Watson, President of the Delta Mill Society,
in support of \$40,000 Community Grant Request.**

Supporting info: 2 page addendum with grant application. DMS Spring/Summer newsletter with detailed financial information on why the \$40,000 is needed (see www.deltamill.org).

Main Points

OUR ASK

1. \$40,000 to take us to break even. I was advised to ask for what we need – this is what we need to stay open.
2. That financial support for the DMS be incorporated as a line item in future TRL budgets similar to what most other municipalities do. This process used to be called “Grants to Others” – the DMS is not an “other” in the township.

Note: I’m now the 5th representative from the DMS to stand before council in the last 14 years with this type of request. This request has also been made directly to the Mayor (30K ask in January 2023 – our costs have increased since) and to the CAO (spring 2024).

BACKGROUND

- The DMS, formed in 1963 and incorporated in 1972, is a non-profit charity, aka a “Public Benefit Corporation”
- DMS owns and maintains 3 heritage structures in Delta, The Old Stone Mill, The Old Town Hall and the Blacksmiths Shop. We’ve put well over 2 million dollars into the preservation/restoration of these buildings.
- DMS is the largest and most active heritage group in the township with more than \$100,000 of annual economic activity.
- The Old Stone Mill is one of only two public museums in the township and in 2024 the only museum to be open 7 days a week from the May long weekend to Labour Day which is needed to support tourism, a main economic driver of TRL.
- We are the only heritage group in TRL to offer living history – Blacksmithing (the only blacksmith shop in TRL) and Milling (the only operating gristmill in the region).
- We operate the Old Town Hall as a community hall since Delta, unlike the other villages in TRL, does not have a municipally supported hall.
- We also operate the only public washrooms in Delta during the tourism season.
- We get very limited government support – Federal = \$0 (outside of summer student grants which anyone can get), Ontario = \$1,148 and TRL = ??
- The only reason we’re still open is due to support from a benefactor who presently covers the \$40K shortfall. Without that support we’d now be closed to the huge detriment of Delta and TRL. That’s the situation we are in now (fully explained in the Spring/Summer 2024 newsletter).

TRACK RECORD

You will be supporting an organization that has vast expertise in protecting and presenting the Old Stone Mill NHS as well as operating the Old Town Hall as a community hall. We are not an unknown quantity. I’d be happy to sit down in Delta with any councilor to go through all the details (allow 4 hours for this).

FAIRNESS

- TRL supports two groups in Portland to the tune of \$38K as a line item in the budget in lieu of having a municipal hall (set a precedent).
- TRL supports the Elgin and District Historic Society through continued ownership and maintenance (new roof this year) of the Red Brick School House which is not operated as a public museum.
- Delta should be supported, both public museum and community hall wise, to at least the level that Portland and Elgin receive.

ECONOMICS

- We've been a fundamental driver of the economic revitalization of Delta. Our continued existence, operating as a public museum will support future growth in Delta and TRL in general.
- We hire local youth, providing a local employment opportunity for them as well as a learning experience regarding the heritage of their area.
- We act as a tourism lure to TRL – the view of the mill is iconic, everyone uses that image and tourists come here to visit it. So it is critical to TRL that we stay open for the full tourism season.

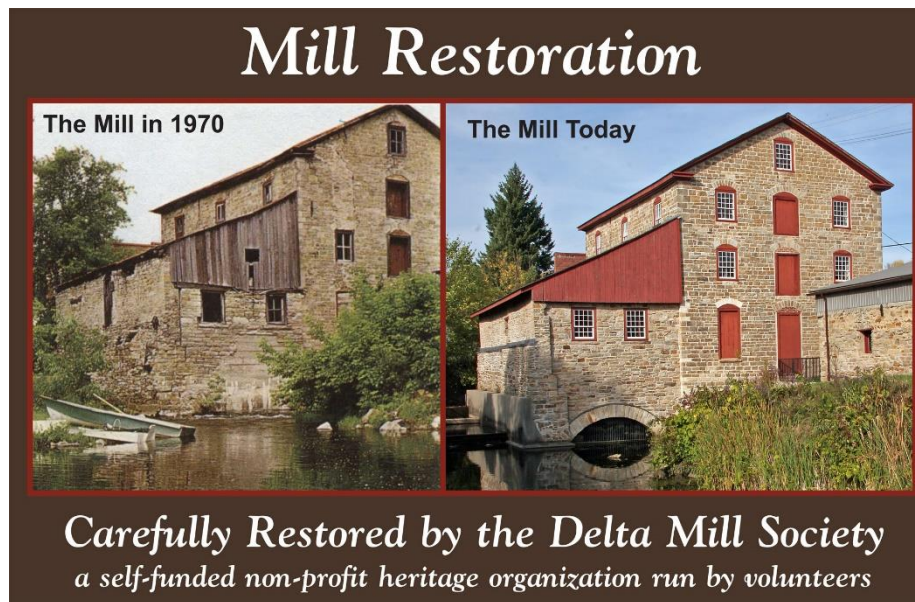
HERITAGE

- Our most compelling argument for TRL support is heritage, we are the most significant heritage site in TRL outside of the Rideau Canal (the Rideau Canal and the Old Stone Mill are the only National Historic Sites of Canada within the township). The Old Stone Mill is the oldest building in the township still standing in its original form.
- Our prime mandate is to preserve and present the Old Stone Mill and we've done, and continue to do, an excellent job of that. As required by our NHS designation, we maintain the mill in a state of "Commemorative Integrity". The former heritage planner for the Rideau Canal wrote last year that we were one of the best presented heritage sites in Canada. An evaluation by the Canadian Museum Association last summer came to a similar conclusion.
- The Old Stone Mill, Old Town Hall and Blacksmith Shop are now an integral part of a beautiful heritage district in Delta which incorporates heritage structures (incl. the Jubilee Block), greenspaces, Millstream Park and heritage houses (i.e. Okum residence).
- We have a large collection of artifacts which we carefully maintain and document – 2024 is the 4th year of a large collection project (benefactor supported) which continues.
- We share our resources and expertise with other heritage groups in TRL, including with the Rideau Lakes History Centre (we donated lots of archival material to them and have partnered on digitizing projects) and the Portland on the Rideau Historical Society (we've donated two locally made boats to them as well as offered our collections expertise to help them manage their own collection.)
- The Old Stone Mill is an incredibly important heritage site that that the municipality should be supporting. I'll use the fact that the mill was featured on a Canadian Stamp in 2010 to show not only the local, but the national importance of this heritage site. I cannot understate the importance of that – hopefully you, as township councilors will recognize this as well.
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BOTTOM LINE

- We are well worth supporting for the many reasons shown above. TRL can in fact easily afford it – it will be public money very well spent.

VISUALS



Delta Mill Society Accomplishments & Continued Work in Protecting and Presenting the Mill

The DMS has over a 60-year track record in protecting and presenting the Old Stone Mill. This visual tells that story in a nutshell.



National Heritage

This iconic view of the mill was featured on a 2010 Canadian Stamp in recognition of the national heritage value the Old Stone Mill represents to Canada.