

Local Archives Update

January 2023



Agenda

- The goal of this presentation
- The third-party request
- My thoughts
- The direction from Council
- The results of the review

The Goal of the Presentation



- Educate, educate, educate, then ask Council the question
 - This is the education portion of the process for this council
- To give you an overview of the factors that led to the discussions at Council about local archives in the past

The Third-Party Request

- There is a long-standing request that expands beyond a decade
- Renewed requests over the past term of Council
 - For your review, I have provided a copy of a recent request for consideration

My Thoughts



- In general, my thoughts on this matter have not changed since my previous presentation
 - For your review, I provided a copy of that presentation
- Spheres of Influence
 - Municipal Act
- This is most certainly not an area we need to address for County of Middlesex records management
- Shared history challenge
- Which Middlesex?
- Care and control of records

My Thoughts



- We have a number of legislatively required services that are underfunded
- The potential economic development benefits of an archive are significantly overstated
- Zero capital availability
- Several reviews by Council over this time including a visioning session and a Council decision
- It is always a dangerous precedent to go outside of legislatively required programs and we do so with extreme caution
 - I can only think of two minor exceptions in my 25 years at the County

The Direction From Council



- On October 26, 2021, I presented a report to Council titled *Archive Considerations - An Overview of Previous Discussion Points*
- Council directed staff to give further consideration to potential options and discussed including a feasibility study in 2022 Budget discussions
- The 2022 Budget Committee recommended that \$15,000 be included in the 2022 Administration Budget to conduct a feasibility study for the digitization of non-municipal records
- Staff was also directed to explore Municipal Modernization Funding for the study
- Council approved the Budget Committee's recommendation on March 8, 2022

The Results of My Initial Review



- An electronic archive option is achievable with appropriate investment
 - There are several software options
 - We have narrowed it down to two software options
 - This option could be achieved while maintaining local responsibility for the preservation of documents that are of local historical significance
- It is possible to reallocate internal resources to create the policies to support the effective development of an archive
 - While there is a cost to doing this, it is possible to assign a team member to this project to establish the framework required

The Results of My Initial Review



- A hybrid model that utilizes both volunteer and paid casual staff to create the base archive repository can be created
 - There will be associated Human Resources and Equipment costs
- Council's original goal was to obtain "modernization funding" to complete a "feasibility study"
 - An additional round of modernization funding has not been announced
 - This project would fit nicely into that framework for lower-tier municipalities
 - We are consistently watching for funding that would support this project at the provincial level

Next Steps



- Presentation of the financial impact analysis to County Council
- Obtain direction from Council for this third-party request during the budget process
- Continue ongoing search for provincial funding for the Human Resources and Software support for an electronic archive over the course of 2023