



February 10, 2020

**RE: City of London Grant Cut to Fanshawe Pioneer Village**

Mayor Ed Holder and Members of Council;

First let me begin by thanking the City of London for its ongoing support of Fanshawe Pioneer Village. In 2003-2004 Fanshawe Pioneer Village fell on difficult times and the City stepped up to financially support the organization. As some of you may recall the Village had been on the verge of closing, but because of overwhelming public support and the support of City Council, a new strategic direction was developed. City Council approved an annual stabilization grant, provided the Village met its obligations in the Strategic Plan. In 2013 the new Spriet Family Visitor Centre was built following a successful capital fundraising campaign, and funding from Federal and Provincial stimulus programs. Our organization has met all of its commitments in that Strategic Plan, which has given the City the confidence to provide continuous and stable financial support to Fanshawe Pioneer Village.

Since 2004 the City of London has provided our organization an operating grant to support the programs we provide for the community and the maintenance of the historic Village and artifact collection. From 2009 to 2016 annual funding from the City was \$380,598 and was lowered through the Community Grants program to \$360,000 for the last three years. This is about to change dramatically! The City's grant to our organization is being reduced to \$234,500 in 2019 and \$256,500 each year from 2021 to 2023.

Fanshawe Pioneer Village exists today because of the stabilization the City's annual grant has provided. Over the past ten years the Village has grown its earned revenues and managed its budget on a break-even basis. This is after donations, countless hours of volunteer support and a cost conscious approach to staffing and expenditures. The current reduction we are facing in our City grant could result in as much as a \$100,000 deficit in Village operations this year. The Village has no significant operating reserves to offset that large of a deficit, even for one year. While every effort will be made to increase revenues through fundraising and donations - and to reduce expenditures, there is slim hope this size of a funding cut can be fully managed.

The Board would like to advise Council of the implications of this cut in our Community Grant funding. While we will make every effort to manage costs and increase revenues, we cannot operate with a sustained deficit. If the Village cannot provide a reasonable product and service because of reduced resources, attendance will drop and eventually the Village will be forced to close. The Village has continually met its entire obligation to the City that came with providing a stable grant to the organization since 2004. The proposed grant reduction for 2020 - 2023, destabilizes the financial health of Fanshawe Pioneer Village and puts its viability at risk.

The Board of Fanshawe Pioneer Village requests the City reconsider the size of the funding reduction to our organization. Without it being restored closer to previous levels, the future will not include a Pioneer Village in London.

Thank you,

Mary Anne Dowding  
Board Chair, Fanshawe Pioneer Village  
London & Middlesex Heritage Museum