NEWS

CANADA CULTURAL SPACES FUND

Grant almost halves cost of Granthams Hall restoration

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Staff Writer

Approximately $235,400 has been provided to the Granthams Hall rehabilitation project in the form of a federal grant, almost halving the amount the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) will have to pay to complete the project.

Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country MP, was scheduled to make the funding announcement at the hall, located in Granthams Landing, on Thursday, Aug. 15.

"We are proud to contribute to the renewal of Granthams Landing Community Hall through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund," said Goldsmith-Jones in a release prior to Thursday's announcement.

The historic hall was used as a United Church when it was built – largely by volunteers – in 1931, and has been a fixture in the community as an arts venue and social gathering place. The SCRD purchased the hall from the Granthams Landing Improvement District in 2009 as part of the Granthams Landing water system transfer. No asset management plan was in place, however, and the hall fell into disrepair. By 2015 it was shuttered because of safety concerns, following an engineering report on the poor condition of the roof and foundation.

"The closure of the hall was devastating to the community, and a profound loss to the artists and creators who used the building. After many years, the hall is now getting a new lease on life thanks to this support and will, once again, take its place as an important community asset and place to gather," said Goldsmith-Jones.

MARK HILTZ PHOTO

Granthams Hall was raised in July to allow a new foundation to be installed.

To pay for the repairs, the SCRD board had committed to a budget of approximately $600,000 through a combination of loans to be paid by taxation, and grants. The application for the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund was still pending as they voted to move ahead with the repairs last spring, offering the job to Sunshine Coast contractor Summerhill Fine Homes.

Mark Hiltz, SCRD director for West Howe Sound, responding to the announcement of the federal grant, said: "It's been a 10-year process, it really has been, from back to 2009 to now, this is a relationship that's going to carry forward for the next generations. I think there's a lot of pride from the community." Despite staff and political turnover, "the project kept moving forward," he added.

"It's really good. It took persistence."

Work on the building began in June and should be complete by the end of 2019. The entire hall was raised in early July to allow the new foundation to be installed and was lowered back into place Aug. 7. Electrical, lighting, roof and other repairs and upgrades are next, in addition to the installation of a septic tank and washroom, a wheelchair-accessible ramp and audio-visual equipment. The existing colour scheme will be preserved with a new paint job.

"Our government knows that it is especially important to invest in places like Granthams Landing, where there are fewer venues for professional arts presentations and exhibits," said Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, in the release. "Funding will provide residents along the Sunshine Coast with access to a renewed, modernized facility to experience arts and culture."

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