



Wollaston Public Library Board
c/o Wollaston Public Library
PO Box 280
Coe Hill ON K0L 1P0
613-337-5183

October 3, 2025

RE: Request for Council to donate the property at 5477 Hwy 620 (at Centre Street) to the Library Board, or to approve a bylaw to provide the Library Board with first right of refusal to purchase the property.

Dear Mayor Fuerth and Members of Council,

On September 24th the Wollaston Public Library Board met to discuss Council's recent motion to "accept" our Letter dated July 30th, which was our request for the Township to retain and not sell the property located at 5477 Hwy 620 (at Centre Street).

The Board noted that this property had been designated previously by Council for a future library and community hub space.

The September Clerk's report advised Council that it could "donate" the property, rather than incurring the costs of having it appraised.

The Library Board is requesting that Council consider the following two options.

- 1) Donate the property to the Library Board, *or*
- 2) Pass a bylaw granting first right of refusal to purchase the land to the Library Board.

The Board believes this location is ideally situated for a library facility. It is located next to an existing parkette with community recreational space, it is centrally located, visible and accessible. There is also the potential to add municipal offices and/or community hub space in the future. We have confirmed that there is a well on site, although there is no septic system.

As Council knows, our current Library is housed in an older portable on the school board property, and there are no washroom facilities available. Since 2016, the Board's

Strategic Plan has had a goal to pursue a new location with washroom facilities to better serve our patrons and the broader community.

The Township purchased 5477 Hwy 620 in 2019 without using ratepayer dollars and with the commitment that the property would be used to benefit the community. The Library Board is prepared to move forward on plans to develop this community asset and build a new library space along with improvements such as dedicated parking and washroom facilities, ideally in partnership with the Township.

The Board has done some preliminary research into the costs of having a new school portable purchased, delivered and installed at that address to serve as a library. The estimated cost is \$170,000.00.

If the Township were to donate this property to the Library Board, its plan would be to pursue a more affordable option which would be to purchase and renovate a used portable and install a septic system to have accessible washrooms added to the building.

The Board believes that it would be able to fundraise and pursue government grant opportunities to finance this building goal **without requesting municipal funding to complete the project.**

The Board would work in partnership with Township staff to determine requirements such as the placement of the building and required permits, and would support efforts to allow for future development such as an expansion for municipal offices, council chambers and/or a community hub space.

In order for the Library Board to apply for grant funding, it is necessary to show ownership or a long-term lease of the involved property, which has led the Board to present the two options above for Council's consideration.

We understand that the Township staff is currently cutting the grass on this site, and that it receives no revenue from taxes from the property. If the Library Board installed a building on this site, we would seek to add grass-cutting and an exemption from municipal taxes to the Annual Service Agreement. As this reflects the current situation with the property, the Board anticipates no new costs for the Township.

The Township currently covers the cost of insurance for the library, so the costs should be similar for a new location. The Library Board currently budgets for maintenance and would continue to do so. We would need to discuss snow removal from a parking area, but it is our understanding that the Township currently removes snow from municipal parking lots.

During our board meeting we also discussed and considered the following:

- Council's desire to find revenues for the fire hall build;
- The safety of children walking to the municipal park;
- Township amalgamation discussions; and
- Lack of community consultation about this proposed sale.

While it would not be our first choice, should Council decide not to donate the property to the Library Board, we would ask it to enact a bylaw to give the Library Board the right of first refusal to purchase this property.

In any event, the Library Board is urging Council to provide us with the opportunity to build on this site, in the best interest of our community.

We look forward to discussing this matter further.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Wollaston Public Library Board,

Roxanne Lambert, Chair