

February 7, 2025

Warden Grant Jones and Elgin County Council

Via email: CAO@elgin.ca; kthompson@elgin.ca

Re: Relocation of the Aylmer Library Branch to the East Elgin Community Complex

Warden Grant Jones and Elgin County Council,

At their Regular Meeting held on February 5, 2025, Town of Aylmer Council passed the following resolution:

Resolution No. 36-25

Moved by Deputy Mayor Barbour and seconded by Councillor Oslach:

Whereas the Town of Aylmer desires for full consideration of all viable locations for the Aylmer library with consideration for public engagement and input on options before the Town of Aylmer, the Township of Malahide, and Elgin County;

That Report CAO 09-25 entitled Elgin County Council Correspondence – Relocation of the Aylmer Library be received for information; and,

That Aylmer Council express their appreciation to Elgin County Council for reviewing and advancing the issue of a new location for the library; and,

That Aylmer Council recommend to Elgin County Council that they establish a Committee to undertake public engagement from residents of Malahide and Aylmer on the library, their proposal to move the library to the East Elgin Community Complex and other possible options for the library's location; and,

That this recommendation be provided to Elgin County Council and the Township of Malahide for consideration.

The motion is Carried.

A copy of the report titled "Elgin County Council Correspondence – Relocation of the Aylmer Library" from the Chief Administrative Officer is attached as information.

Thank you for your consideration,

Owen Jaggard
Owen Jaggard

Director of Legislative Services/Clerk | Town of Aylmer

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CC:

Blaine Parkin, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Katherine Thompson, Manager of Administrative Services/Deputy Clerk

Attached: Report CAO 09-25 Elgin County Council Correspondence – Relocation of the Aylmer Library



Alternative formats and communication support available upon request. Please contact clerks@town.aylmer.on.ca or 519-773-3164 for assistance.

Date	January 30, 2024
To	Council – February 5, 2025
From	Andy Grozelle, Chief Administrative Officer
Report No.	CAO 09-25
Report Title	Elgin County Council Correspondence – Relocation of the Aylmer Library

Recommendation

That Report CAO 09-25 entitled Elgin County Council correspondence – Relocation of the Aylmer Library be received for information;

And, That Aylmer Council express their appreciation to Elgin County Council for reviewing and advancing the issue of a new location for the library;

And That Aylmer Council recommend to Elgin County Council that they establish a Committee to undertake public engagement from residents of Malahide and Aylmer on the library and their proposal to move the library to the East Elgin Community Complex;

And That this recommendation be provided to Elgin County Council and the Township of Malahide for consideration.

Executive Summary

The Town is highly appreciative of Elgin County Council for advancing the issue an improved library services for the communities of Malahide and Aylmer. Public engagement and input are essential to any change of this nature. The Town is also aware that a private business location would like to be considered as well for a new

library location and in fairness to all it is important to consider this to avoid favouritism of existing publicly owned infrastructure. Staff believe it is an appropriate request that Elgin County Council establish a Committee to work through the public input phase and consider any other proposals for library relocation that may be submitted prior to making recommendations to Elgin County Council upon next steps.

Background

The Town is again appreciative of Elgin County Council of advancing this matter. This issue has a long history, and it is not the intention of staff to rehash what has been relayed to Council in previous reports. This issue most recently came forward on September 18, 2024, when Aylmer Council heard a report from the Dalene van Zyl, local branch supervisor outlining Elgin County's concerns and complaints with the Old Town Hall library location. Direction was provided to staff to investigate and report back to Council. The subsequent staff report included a request to the County serving as the Library Board to establish a Committee to bring stakeholders together and work upon a strategy to advance this matter.

The attached correspondence from the County Council suggesting the advancement of the EECC as a library location is the outcome of this effort.

Analysis

Establishing a committee will provide a forum for stakeholders to gather and provide independent advice, based on public input and engagement, on the Aylmer library to Elgin County Council and its partner municipalities. Given the extensive history of the library in Aylmer, staff maintain public input and engagement in the form of a dedicated committee is required. The Town of Aylmer does not provide library services, and the relationship is simply that of a landlord/tenant. Despite this, the Town does have a vested interest in the advancement of culture, education and access to services within our community.

Stakeholders in this issue go beyond the Town. Given the high utilization of library services by residents in Malahide Township, they also have a large role to play. Town staff believe this makes it critical for Malahide residents to have input and engagement upon this issue, and that such efforts are not directly managed by the Town of Aylmer. Leadership from the County in their role as the Library Board is important to assessing input and making recommendations to Elgin County and the member municipalities.

The Town of Aylmer did not intend any offence by referencing governance as a potential issue with local library services. It is a fact that in the 1980's the local library board was dissolved and that same legislation established Elgin County Council as the Library Board. This conferred all the obligations and responsibilities of a library board directly on Elgin County Council. Such legislative changes occurred throughout the 1980's to early 2000's and were commonly associated with council's serving as boards

of health. In most instances municipalities would establish separate terms of reference and conduct separate meetings. This highlights the ability for a board to make decisions that may later be reviewed and not supported by the municipality.

Although not applicable to Elgin County, the province has established a preference for library boards with a large degree of independence. This is evident in the *Public Libraries Act R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P.44* which limits the amount of council members appointed to library boards to less than a majority. In the context of Aylmer's request to Elgin County Council, the establishment of a committee is not a large request, but represents a small step to allow for some review and analysis to occur independently prior to recommendations coming forward to County Council. The Town does not believe the issue of a new library location necessarily requires such a review and apologize if that was the sentiment that County Council was left with from the Town's request.

It is important to highlight that the Town of Aylmer has no capital funds assigned to any library redevelopment. 2024 and 2025 also represent record years of capital investment in growth and replacement of existing infrastructure by the Town. As a result, our reserves are depleted and we have limited capacity to entertain new projects.

As the County's largest urban settlement area, it is important that Elgin County invest in the Town of Aylmer to support broader regional growth and development. Common-sense economic development logic establishes that investing in urban communities serves as a catalyst to support growth with broad benefits to an entire region. Supporting urban communities helps everyone through increasing the available assessment base at both tiers and improves regional service provision.

Aylmer is unique in the low amount of funds transferred back to the community because of the limited County infrastructure in the Town. It is important for the Town to continue to apply consistent pressure on County Council to step outside of policies that are focused on providing support to rural roads, culverts, and bridges. County Council is ultimately the body charged with addressing unique circumstances where policies fall short, and exemptions are merited. It is important for Aylmer Council to continue to advocate for the County to come forward with some form of a new deal for our community and/or investments beyond what has historically been considered. Aylmer is a thriving urban community, however we do still require support and investment that are similar in value to those provided to the surrounding rural areas. Aylmer should not become a have not community because we are placed in a position where we have to either go it alone or not proceed with projects.

Conclusion

Town staff are highly appreciative of Elgin County Council advancing this issue. Staff believe it is important to undertake engagement and diligence on potential locations for any library move. We are recommending that Elgin County Council establish a committee to begin this process.

Attachments

Attachment A – Letter -Re: Relocation of the Aylmer Library Branch to the East Elgin Community Complex

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Grozelle
Chief Administrative Officer

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MALAHIDE
A proud tradition, a bright future.



February 24, 2025

Warden Jones & Elgin County Council
c/o Katherine Thompson - Manager of Administrative Services/Deputy Clerk
& Brian Masschaele – Director of Community and Cultural Services
(sent via email: kthompson@elgin.ca and bmasschaele@elgin.ca)

RE: Relocation of the Aylmer Library Branch to the East Elgin Community Complex

Please be informed that the Township of Malahide Council, during its meeting on February 20, 2025, approved the following resolution:

“Moved By: Sarah Leitch
Seconded By: Mark Widner

WHEREAS the Township has received correspondence from the County of Elgin and the Town of Aylmer regarding the relocation of the Aylmer Library Branch to the East Elgin Community Complex;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Township of Malahide receives the correspondence and supports the opportunity to participate in discussions regarding the relocation, suggesting that these discussions occur in an open, public forum rather than through the establishment of a committee.

Carried”

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A Adams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Allison Adams,
Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk