

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: April 28, 2025

Subject: ECDEV-2025-11 Grants and Donations By-Law Changes

Report from: Jennifer Isber-Legge, Economic Development Coordinator

Attachments: Draft Grant and Community Support Policy

Recommendation

Be It Resolved that Council hereby approves Report ECDEV-2025-11 Grants and Community Support Policy;

AND repeals By-Law No. 45-2021;

AND approves the Grant and Community Support Policy to take effect in 2026;

AND FURTHER approves the appropriate By-law coming forward to bring force and effect to this policy.

Background

[By-Law No. 45-2021](#) came into effect on June 28th, 2021 and has guided decisions regarding Facility Commitments, Financial Commitments, and the Community Grant Application process to provide support to non-profit groups and organizations that provide programs, services or events that are of a general benefit to the community since that time.

Support given through the Grants and Donations By-Law is within the Economic Development budget.

In 2025, a total of \$26,346.02 was allocated to support items listed in Schedule D and E, while \$10,484.55 was approved for eligible requests submitted through the application process.

On January 13, 2025, staff were directed to bring a report forward with updates and recommendations to the Grants and Donations By-Law.

Municipal staff met to review the challenges with the current grants and donation policy and have provided some recommendations.

Analysis

Challenges with the current policy include inconsistent support, unutilized donations that have been budgeted for, a lack of reporting and accountability, year-round requests requiring staff and Council time, single year events with high budget demands, overlap with formal agreements and grant support, and uneven financial impact across departments.

A grant is defined as a sum of money or in-kind support provided to assist with a specific project or program. Grants are typically applied for and subject to certain conditions—such as reporting requirements—and do not need to be repaid. A donation is a voluntary act of charity towards an organization without restrictions.

To improve clarity in the Grants and Donations Policy, it is recommended to repeal the Grants and Donations Policy and bring forward an updated Grants and Community Support Policy.

Grant applications may be submitted by non-profit groups and organizations that deliver programs or services of general benefit to the community. Applications will be accepted up to the annual deadline of October 1st. Applications received outside this cycle will still be considered by a committee of staff, subject to the availability of budgeted funds, and will be evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis.

It is recommended that during budget discussions Council would allot a set amount to be used for grant requests, and an amount for in-kind grant requests. Applications received after allotted funds have been exhausted would not be considered.

Schedule D of By-Law 45-2021 items may be more appropriately directed to relevant departments. For example, Parks Enhancements are already included in the Economic Development budget.

Schedule E of By-Law 45-2021 items, which relate to benefits provided to non-profit organizations through existing agreements, may be accounted for within the Facilities and Recreation budget. For instance, in-kind use of the kitchen and community centre by a curling club under an existing agreement would fall under this category.

It is recommended that loans be considered on a case-by-case basis that will require Council approval and a specific application process including specific terms and conditions.

Link to Strategic/Master Plan

6.3 Facilitating Community Growth

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding/Link to Procurement Policy

In-kind donation of use of Arran-Elderslie facilities will result in less revenue and will no longer be recorded as an expense.

Approved by: Emily Dance, Chief Administrative Officer