

July 16, 2024

The Town of Blue Mountains
32 Mill Street
Thornbury, ON
N0H 2P0

Attention: Council Members

I read with curiosity the article in the July 3rd edition of The Review about the Community Improvement Plan (CIP). I didn't realize \$250,000 was budgeted for this plan. Nor did I realize the parameters determining the distribution of this money as being broad community revitalization goals through grants or loans to private property owners and tenants. I appreciated that a summary of the applications submitted was provided and I was curious as a property owner paying property taxes to see how my taxes were being used.

I assumed this money would go towards not-for-profit organizations but was dismayed to see many applications were being considered that would benefit private businesses and owner's property. As well, it looks like the Staff is considering expanding this Plan to include rural and agricultural properties, the Blue Mountain Village area in addition to removing the loan program! My husband and I own a commercial building and it would never occur to us to expect anyone other than our business to foot the bill to upgrade a roof or windows, or build a gazebo and patio, or beautify the sidewalk by adding elevated steel planters, or renovating shower stalls... all priced in the thousands. I wondered if these upgrades to these properties would also increase the property resale value...at my expense. Shouldn't some of these upgrades be considered as a normal cost of running a business?

I understand there is a desire to revitalize the town but does the general public need to pay for upgrades that increase the value of private property? Shouldn't the onus be on the shoulders of the private property owners or businesses themselves to find ways to raise funds to enhance their own business? Sure, give financial support for the non-profit organizations but please reconsider this generosity at my expense. My hope is that Counsel will limit the applications to projects that will result in public enhancement and not private property gain at taxpayers expense.

Betty Smith, Clarksburg