



Date: November 22, 2017

Report To: Economic Development Committee

From: Tyson Dennis, Chief Building Official/Municipal Planner

#### **Re Examining the Residential Building Grant Application Process**

The Planning and Development Department has met with Tannis Drysdale to examine and make recommendations for possible changes to the *Residential Building Grant* currently offered by the Town of Fort Frances to property owners to assist with maintenance and upgrades to their properties. Since the grant program's inception in 2012, the participation by the public has been low to moderate. The Town of Fort Frances has experienced the idling and eventually the closing of the paper mill within this time frame. Building permit statistics shown below indicate an actual increase in building permits and value of work within the Town of Fort Frances since 2012. The value and number of building permits for residential construction has steadily increased since the start of New Gold production in the Rainy River District.

The grant has been available for six years. Program requirements include:

- the property must be residential
- the value of the renovation must be valued \$25,000.00 + on the building permit
- property must have existing sewer and water services

Once an application is completed and confirmed the owners are eligible for the grant, receipts can be submitted to start the return for rebates of Town services.

The Residential Building Grant application and the Public Information Brochures, were updated recently to better describe the program. A minimum project value of \$25,000.00 and rebate up to \$2000.00 in Town services or costs would be reimbursed to the applicant. The previous marketing and delivery of the program has fallen short while comparing options of today's tools of newspaper, social media and web based advertising. The savings of \$2000.00 should be incentive to the public to apply for the grant if marketed properly.

The recommendation of the Planning and Development Department is to revisit the Residential Building Grant process again in the fourth quarter of 2018, after thorough marketing is completed using newspaper, social media and web based advertising. If the public recognizes and understands the grant opportunities available, construction permits could be increased with rebates offered by the Town of Fort Frances. Increasing the grants reimbursement or decreasing the grants minimum project value, does not benefit the public if they are not aware of the opportunity which already exists with the Town.

Respectfully submitted by,



Tyson Dennis

Chief Building Official and Municipal Planner

Town of Fort Frances

<u>Building Permit Activity</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Average</u>
Residential Building Permits All Categories	64	65	75	100	77	83	77.33333333
Value of Construction	\$1,321,000.00	\$1,557,636.00	\$2,661,484.60	\$2,196,419.44	\$4,184,450.00	\$4,957,700.00	\$2,813,115.01
Residential Building Grants Applied	1	5	7	11	6	6	6
Residential Building Grants Completed	0	3	4	8	5	3	3.83333333