



H E P I E R G R O U P . C A

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To our valued membership;

As you may have heard, the Council of Port Hope recently established a Pier Task Force to study the implications for the community of repurposing some or all of the buildings on the Center Pier. The Pier Group congratulates Port Hope on the formation of the Task Force.

It is not specifically clear in the Terms of Reference for the Task Force what our relationship will be, or the degree to which we may be able to help in their work. However, one of our steering Committee members, Will Ryan, is on the task force, and as such he will carry forward our message to them as the work proceeds.

As you know we have worked as a group energetically for the past three years to help illustrate what a special place this is and to describe the potential to reuse these buildings for some creative purpose. We look forward to contributing our past work and future energy to the detailed investigations the Task Force will now undertake. Their work won't be easy and we recognize as they do there are hurdles to overcome. Issues of the harbour and site cleanup and those of building condition and scale of the project are serious considerations, of course.

However, set against these issues, the conservation and redevelopment, the repurposing, of the Center Pier in Port Hope, represents one of the greatest opportunities to both create a lively, interesting and uniquely Port Hope waterfront and spark the general uplifting of the core of our beautiful historic town in a generation or more.

Designed in the 1850s and with a group of buildings dating to the turn of the last century, Port Hope may now have the opportunity to join with a handful of communities in Ontario which have used increasingly rare post industrial waterfront resources to create truly exciting facilities for new uses. Old structures such as these, for many residents, contain spaces, views, materials and details that most of us rarely get to experience at first hand. Together with a spectacular view of the lake and waterfront in one direction and a panoramic view upriver to the historic core of our town nestled between two hills in the other, this is a very special place to convert for reuse. You would have to work hard to create a place with the attributes that already exist here.

There are compelling examples of smaller communities such as ours which have found uses for old industrial complexes such as this that have become significant cultural attractions. These attractions have not only created work and jobs within the project but have terrific economic spin offs for all businesses in the community. MassMoca in North Adams Mass. is such a place. Closer to home, albeit a new facility, the local campus of Fleming College in Haliburton has had a similar effect: a higher education facility in the school year becomes an attraction as an art school in the summer.

As a group we will need to continue our hard work in a spirit of enthusiastic support and positive outlook. "No" is not the right answer whereas we believe that "yes" will truly benefit our community. We will monitor the work of the Task Force and work as a "Friends" support team to ferret out good precedents, workable economic case studies, bring in great speakers and illustrate through our special events how this can lead to a positive outcome for our waterfront. Stay tuned for news as it develops and please continue to help us in whatever way you can. This is the critical time we have been working towards.

If other communities can do it so can we!

Phil Goldsmith

Phil Goldsmith, Co-Chair
The Pier Group