



September 5, 2024

The Chamber's history of operating the Info Centre has been consistently positive with our community. Originally, it was operated out of the municipal office where the rent and internet were covered by the Municipality, in exchange for the complete operation of the Info Centre. This included staffing the Info Centre for 35 hours a week in season and 15 hours a week during the off season. In 2014 the Chamber approached the Municipality to move the Information Centre to the South end of the Train Station. That summer was a huge success, towns folk and visitors alike were delighted to see the Train Station open for business. This was only for the summer season after which the Info Centre was returned to the Municipal office. In 2017 when we were asked to move to the Train Station, we were not told at the time that the same offer was going to be given. Seeing that the Train Station was the best location for the Information Centre the Chamber agreed to move over and a few months later were told that we would have to pay rent and internet costs.

The Info Centre is being greatly impacted by the lack of public access to the building. When Living Temagami is closed, as it was for most of the past winter and spring, the entire station appears to be closed. Most patrons and even locals don't understand that there are multiple businesses operating out of the station. Only our "Open" sign is at the north end of the building is visible from the front of the building, and when the front door and the other two window's signs are off, it appears one was left on in error, and not that we are open via the back of the building. Increased signage, and even signage on the front door directing people to the back, has not helped. People see the front door closed, and they believe the entire station is closed.

There is also a safety concern with the only entrance being through the back of the building throughout the winter months, as the snow clearing/sanding/salting etc. is not as well maintained as the front of the building and poses greater risks to patrons and staff.

We will continue to be open three days a week at a total of fifteen hours throughout the fall/winter/spring, and five days a week at a total thirty-five hours throughout the summer. Most of our sales are made in the summer months when the tourists are frequenting the visitor's Centre. This summer, we were able to have the front door open only because our administrator, Amber Nussey contracted with Living Temagami for 15 hours a week to manage their summer staff and gift shop for them over the summer. Because of this the Chamber decided to collaborate with Living Temagami therefore ensuring the entire building was open and accessible to all. The Chamber was able to sell over \$3500 in gift shop items and souvenirs in July and August. This is a stark contrast to last year where we made under \$500. This collaboration ended on August 31st so now the Info Centre is once again being operated in the North end of the building.



We are proposing and our goal would be to switch sides and move the Info Centre to the south end of the Train Station so it would be accessible to all visitors, residents and non-residents year-round without question. We offer services to a vast target group and not just those interested in arts and culture and would be able to direct any interested patrons through to Living Temagami should they continue to operate in the North side.

We believe that the Information Centre being fully operated by the Chamber of Commerce is a service to the municipality and community, and we should be considered a service provider, not a tenant. Consider the Information Centre as a service like the library, for example. We provide services to visitors, residents and non-residents alike, whereas the library-exclusively services residents. We offer service and support to a vast target group year-round and are working to expand our programs and classes going forward. The use of the mezzanine level would allow for us to offer the classes we've previously offered, in house, such as Smart Serve certification, Safe Food Handling, CPR, Babysitting, Safe at Home, and additional classes. We also have an engaged group of volunteers that assist us with events such as the Wild Game Dinner.

We support the local economy and intend to continue to do so in more dynamic and engaging ways, and we'd like the opportunity to meet the needs of our patrons consistently and effectively by offering the front door of the train station as the Information Centre.

We are looking for support from the Municipality in the following ways.

1. Allowing us to move to the south side of the Station.
2. Assisting us with Internet fees so that we can continue to offer WIFI access to those who are stopping for a rest or visiting the station.
3. Assisting with the costs associated with the Visitors Guide which is sent out to numerous businesses, organizations, other Chamber of Commerce and Enroutes across Ontario.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter and we look forward to further discussion.

Your Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors