

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **TOWN EXPLORES INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO CULTURAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

For Immediate Release – Tuesday, March 19, 2024  
Kirkland Lake, ON

Following the Regular Council Meeting on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, the Town of Kirkland Lake has embarked on a path to reevaluate its cultural landscape. Council has directed Administration to terminate the Lease Agreement with the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) for the Sir Harry Oakes Château, and to explore alternative methods for providing cultural services in the community.

Under the Lease Agreement with the OHT, the Town has overseen operations at the Sir Harry Oakes Château, home to the Museum of Northern History, since 1981. However, a recent Building Condition Assessment, funded by the OHT has revealed significant repair costs totaling \$1,222,156. Despite efforts by the Trust to secure funding, a shortfall of approximately \$950,000 remains for essential repairs, compounded by annual operating expenses exceeding \$260,000. Considering these financial challenges, sustaining cultural operations at the Chateau has become untenable.

Stacy Wight, Mayor of Kirkland Lake, emphasized the strategic importance of this decision within the framework of the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan for 2024-2026. *“As outlined in our Corporate Strategic Plan, it is imperative to prioritize core services and explore innovative alternatives for non-core services,”* Mayor Wight stated. *“We believe now is the opportune moment for the Town to reassess its role in managing the Chateau and to seek sustainable solutions for preserving our history and fostering community engagement.”*

To facilitate this transition, Council has engaged WSCS Consultants Inc., renowned for their expertise in service delivery analysis. Building upon their previous work in 2020, the consultants will spearhead a Transformation of Cultural Services project. This initiative will encompass a comprehensive visioning with Council, community engagement forums, and the development of a forward-thinking cultural strategy, and a thorough re-evaluation of staffing needs to align with the new service delivery model.

While the Museum of Northern History will remain accessible to the public until the end of summer, staff will gradually shift their focus towards contributing to the new cultural strategy and facilitating the responsible deaccessioning of certain artifacts.

The Town of Kirkland Lake looks forward to embracing this evolution in cultural service delivery, ensuring a vibrant and sustainable future for its residents and visitors alike.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Alan Smith, Chief Administrative Officer  
Town of Kirkland Lake  
T: 705-567-9361, Ext. 236  
E: [Alan.Smith@tkl.ca](mailto:Alan.Smith@tkl.ca)