
RVCA News Release

RVCA WILL BE MOVING

MANOTICK, JANUARY 16, 2006 — After years of discussion, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) confirms that the main office is moving from Dickinson Square in old Manotick to a single, modern, centralized building to be constructed in Beryl Gaffney Park at the corner of Jockvale Road and old Highway 16. The move is forecast for summer 2007.

RVCA has grown with new environmental responsibilities over the past 30 years. It now owns or rents seven office buildings in Manotick housing over 50 professional and administrative staff members including planners, water engineers, foresters, hydrogeologists, biologists, GIS specialists and other scientists. The cost of supplying suitable office space and equipment for the staff in seven different buildings is getting too high. The Board of Directors has taken the decision to move the staff under one roof and save the costs of carrying, heating, repairing and insuring seven smaller, older buildings.

The location of the new office was chosen after a thorough investigation of other options such as renting or leasing bigger existing space. The detailed site plan and building design is underway. With the cooperation of the City of Ottawa, a new conservation headquarters building will be built in Beryl Gaffney Park and be visible from the corner of Jockvale and old Highway 16. Having the Conservation Authority in the park will provide a permanent oversight and perhaps management of the park area for the benefit of area residents.

RVCA has been on Dickinson Square in the heart of old Manotick for 35 years and is very proud of the heritage conservation work it was able to accomplish in the early years. Restoration, upgrading and maintenance of Watson's Mill, the Dickinson House, the Carriage Shed, the old Bank Building, the Weaver's House and the Miller's Oven Restaurant were all accomplished with the guidance of the former Rideau Township LACAC and the leadership and financial accountability of RVCA. The Watson's Mill Manotick Incorporated community group has done a very fine job of maintaining and improving the structure and community use of Watson's Mill in the past five years.

The future use of those heritage buildings (except the Miller's Oven which was previously sold to the Rideau Miller's Oven Seniors Committee) is under discussion. A consultant is being hired to do a "best use" study of the buildings in Dickinson Square. A community-based committee of interest groups and leading citizens will steer this project. The consultant's advisory report to RVCA is expected in six months.

RVCA's mandate has changed over the years to focus entirely on environmental protection of the Rideau Valley watershed, particularly the long term health of the Rideau River and its tributaries. This role has now outgrown the lovely but inefficient office space it occupies in the historic buildings of Manotick. It is clearly time for a new chapter in the life of RVCA and Dickinson Square.

- 30 -

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