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Four properties one step closer to historical designation

Paul Frey, Olds Albertan

Four properties are one step closer to being designated as municipally historic resources following town council agreeing to write letters of intent for four historically significant buildings in town.

The decision to write the letters of intent for the Brown residence, Dr. Hartman residence, Rip Van Winkles and the Kemp Block was made at the June 23 meeting of council.

All councillors were in agreement that preserving the town's historic resources was in the town's interest and many expressed their support for the recommended action.

"I'm so happy to see and hear the history of our community will be preserved," said Coun. Mary Jane Harper.

"It's long overdue," agreed Coun. Arvin Bull.

Mayor Judy Dahl expressed thanks to the Uptowne Olds committee for all their hard work in spearheading the project and getting the ball rolling. The town will now serve 60 days notice to the owners of the properties that are being designated. According to administration, the notice is active for 120 days and any property under the notice is granted all the protections of designation until the 120 days have expired. The notice needs to be active for at least 60 days before the town can legally designate the buildings as municipal historic resources.

Once bylaws are passed designating the four buildings as Municipal Historic Resources, the owners of the buildings can then apply for matching funds from the Alberta government to restore the buildings to period condition.

Leon Durand, co-chair of Uptowne Olds and the owner of the Rip Van Winkles' property, said once the 120 days has passed, he and the owners of the other four properties can go ahead and make repairs to their properties once they receive the

go-ahead from the historic resources management department of Alberta Culture and Community Spirit.

According to Michael Dougherty, manager of Mountain View Museum, applications for \$50,000 in matching funds from the Alberta Historical Resources Fund from those four property owners can now be written for September receipt of funds on any repairs that would be done to those properties. Dougherty noted the applications are a competition-based process, so they would be evaluated against other applications across the province and allocated based on the limited funds available. Another round of funding is also available next February.

Durand said the process of getting buildings designated leads into the Main Street Alberta Program.

"It's all sort of linked. The Main Street (Program) is also going to cover things like streetscaping. We're kind of on the leading edge of this," he said.

Durand said the four property owners that have so far agreed to have their buildings designated realize there is value in preserving history.

"A lot of the buildings that are involved are already historic buildings and the owners want to ... refurbish them back to a historic look," he said.

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