

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM30.4	ACTION			Ward: 11
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Authorization to Release Section 37 Funds for the Heliconian Club - by Councillor Dianne Saxe, seconded by Councillor Mike Colle

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Dianne Saxe, seconded by Councillor Mike Colle, recommends that:

1. City Council increase the 2025 Operating Budget for Non-Program on a one-time basis by \$20,000 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by Section 37 community benefits obtained from the development at 50-60, 62 and 64 Charles Street East and 47 and 61 Hayden Street (Source Account: XR3026-3700671) secured for cultural space, to be used to construct new accessible washrooms at the historic Heliconian Club (Cost Centre: NP2161).
2. City Council direct that the \$20,000 be forwarded to the Heliconian Club upon the signing of an Undertaking by the Heliconian Club that governs the use of the funds and the financial reporting requirements.

Summary

The not-for-profit Heliconian Club is a key network for women living and working in the arts. It also plays an active role in wider community initiatives and maintains an outreach program. It was founded in 1909 as a place for women working in the arts to meet, exchange ideas, and develop as artists, and these needs continue today.

The home of the club is the Heliconian Hall, a National Heritage Site at 35 Hazelton Avenue in Yorkville. The Hall is a valued, welcoming space for creative women in the literary world and in other artistic disciplines. It was built in 1876 when Yorkville was a rural village on Toronto's outskirts. First a church, then headquarters of a painters' union, the building became the Heliconian Hall in 1923.

The building is an excellent example of the rare Carpenter's Gothic architectural style, with a simple board and batten exterior, Victorian rose window, and carved rafters in a high vaulted ceiling. The Heliconian Hall is one of the few buildings of this style remaining in southern Ontario. It was designated a Toronto historic site in 1990 and a National Historic Site in 2008; a plaque was erected outside the building in 2011. Its beautiful acoustics continue to make it one of Toronto's most cherished small concert halls, regularly used as a performance venue and art gallery.

After 150 years, the Hall requires substantial renovations and accessibility upgrades. These section 37 funds, combined with contributions from neighbouring residents' associations, will allow construction of three accessible washrooms, and will make the Hall eligible to apply for federal restoration funds.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM30.4