

April 7, 2026.

Acting Mayor Adam Veri  
Members of Council  
Norfolk County  
50 Colborne St. South  
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4H3

Mr. Al Meneses  
Chief Administrative Office  
Norfolk County  
50 Colborne St. South  
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4H3

William Tiggert  
Clerk  
Norfolk County  
50 Colborne St. South  
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4H3

### **OPTION # 3**

## **THE PRESERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF LYNNWOOD**

### **OVERVIEW**

On March 10, 2026, Committee-In-Council received Report CDS-25-087 "Lynnwood Arts Service Provisions Options", which outlined two options for the future direction of the Lynnwood building and Lynnwood Arts.

Despite ongoing funding from Norfolk County, the Lynnwood Arts Board has informed Norfolk County Council and staff that the operations that exist today under the current lease agreement that is in place, are no longer feasible without additional financial assistance from the municipality.

Paul Hammond, Chair of the Lynnwood Arts Board of Directors, appeared before Committee on March 10, 2026, and informed Committee that the board was unanimous in their desire to relocate to the Norfolk Archives Building. In doing so, they would become a tenant in the building, paying rent, utility costs, etc.

It was noted that to date, there has not been any funds raised towards Lynnwood Arts required portion of the capital improvements to the Lynnwood building.

### **ASSUMPTIONS**

If the Lynnwood Arts moves their operations to the Norfolk Archives building, Norfolk County Council will have the opportunity to put the Lynnwood building on the open market for sale or find an alternative use for the building.

The information provided in Option # 3 is based on Norfolk County's Strategic Plan and their support for the arts and culture sector. Option # 3 would align itself with the Strategic Plan 2022-2026, and the Facilities Master Plan 2025. In the Facilities Master Plan 2025, it "recommends maintaining Arts Centre Services, investing in shared centralized storage, coordinating asset management requirements, encouraging multi-use facilities for broader community benefit" (page 9, CDS-25-087).

In Report CDS-25-087, it states "That Council recognizes the value of the arts in the public realm and supports the provision of arts programs and services in an efficient and effective model" (page 1, CDS-25-087).

In the same report it states that "Norfolk County has a long history of supporting the arts" (page 6, CDS-25-087).

## **CURRENT FINANCIAL PICTURE**

Norfolk County and the Lynnwood Arts Board are currently in the third year of a five year agreement which provides an operating grant of \$30,000 in 2026. Under the Assistance Agreement, there are a number of other payments made to Lynnwood Arts to assist with their operations and the maintenance of the Lynnwood building (page 7, CDS-25-087). Over the five year period, Norfolk County would be providing a total operating subsidy of \$150,000 plus funds to offset other costs.

Should the Lynnwood Arts operations remain at status quo, the cost of the Maximum Operating Levy for the period of 2024 to 2028 would total \$412,000. If you consider the Maximum Levy, the cost becomes \$461,000 (page 13, CDS-25-087, Table 1, Status Quo Costs to Norfolk County).

Option # 2, outlines the costs to Norfolk County should Lynnwood Arts operations relocate to the Archives building. From 2026 to 2028, the cost would be \$91,800, which is primarily made up of a \$30,000 operating grant to Lynnwood Arts in each of the remaining three years (page 15, CDS-25-087, Table 3, Option 2 Costs for Norfolk County).

I have not commented on Option # 1, as it would carry a significant risk for the capital improvements required as well as the ongoing operations of Lynnwood Arts as it exists today. It also requires a substantial financial commitment from Norfolk County to support the operations and maintenance of the building.

Status quo is not an option.

## **LYNNWOOD ARTS OPERATING BUDGET**

While I have not been privy to the detailed operations of Lynnwood Arts, including revenues and expenses, I do know that from 2021 to 2023, a small surplus was generated in each of the three years.

In the 2024 agreement, January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2028, Lynnwood Arts pays \$1 for rent for the five year term. In addition, Lynnwood Arts pays for their own telephone and internet and Norfolk County pays for the utilities including hydro, water, wastewater, and gas.

In addition under the Assistance Agreement (Schedule B), Norfolk County is scheduled to pay the following to Lynnwood Arts in 2026.

- \$30,000 operating grant in 2026 for Lynnwood Arts operations
- \$9,500 per year for payment of the utility expenses
- \$39,200 per year for building maintenance
- \$3,300 for snow removal
- Total to be paid to Lynnwood Arts in 2026 is \$82,000 (based on Table 1, page 13, CDS-25-087).

The Lynnwood Arts Board has stated that the operation of Lynnwood is no longer feasible under the current agreement.

## **THE NEW MODEL**

Under the new model, the Norfolk Arts Council would be the Lessee, and the building would be operated under a Management Board. The Management Board would be responsible for the building expenses, insurance, revenue, and expenses. (See Attachment 1)

The new model is based on sharing costs with a number of partners. A couple of the partners already exist while new organizations are brought on board. Each participating organization would be responsible for their own operating costs such as staffing, rent, telephone, internet, and other day to day expenses. The cost for utilities and building maintenance would be amortized over the amount of square footage that each organization occupies.

The Lynnwood building is underutilized and by bringing in other organizations and community groups, the amount of activity and awareness grows as well as the expected revenues.

Under this model, Lynnwood Arts has an opportunity to remain at the Lynnwood building by becoming a tenant, paying rent based on a calculation to be determined. A similar arrangement that they would have at the Norfolk Archives building. The art collection could remain at Lynnwood until Norfolk County determines the best location for the art.

### **EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH LYNNWOOD ARTS BOARD**

On March 19, 2026, I corresponded by email with Paul Hammond, Board Chair, and another board member at which time I outlined the information that I was proposing in Option # 3. I had also suggested that the Board have an opportunity to discuss my proposal. My understanding in talking to another board member, that this did not take place. I also mentioned that it was my hope that we could work together in order to keep Lynnwood Arts and the art inventory in the Lynnwood building.

Paul provided a quick response saying that it was the intent of the Lynnwood Arts Board to remain in the Lynnwood building. He provided his opinion on why Norfolk County selected Option # 2 and the difficulty that the Lynnwood Arts Board was faced with in fundraising their share of the capital improvements.

There was no mention of Option # 3 and how Lynnwood Arts could be an active participant.

### **LYNNWOOD VERSUS THE NORFOLK COUNTY ARCHIVES BUILDING**

Moving the Lynnwood Arts to the Archives building may be an attractive option financially but some groups and individuals have expressed to me that the Archives building is not a suitable place to accommodate Lynnwood Arts. Those associated with heritage committees or organizations are not only concerned about the effect the move would have on the Archives building, but also the future of the Lynnwood building and the art inventory that is stored in the building.

Finance staff estimated that by 2028, savings of \$633,400 to \$733,400 would result from the sale of the Lynnwood property. However, in Report CDS-25-087, page 16, it projects an estimated cost of \$602,000 for capital upgrades at the Archives building to accommodate the Lynnwood Arts operations. The net gain for Norfolk County is negligible.

### **LYNNWOOD AND THE REVITALIZATION OF DOWNTOWN SIMCOE**

It has long been said that the Lynnwood building could play a significant role in the revitalization of downtown Simcoe. Being a heritage building and one of historical significance, Lynnwood has the opportunity to play a key role in moving this forward. For about the past five years or so, a number of individuals and organizations have said that Simcoe needs to look at a new focus to attract people to the downtown core. Arts and culture sectors come up time and time again. Norfolk County Economic Development, the Simcoe and District Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Simcoe BIA are a few of the groups that have expressed their desire to be involved in the development of the arts sector in Simcoe.

This can be achieved by fully utilizing the Lynnwood building, increasing the hours of operation, utilizing the Lynnwood grounds for more events and working closely with community organizations and partners.

## **THE NEW DIRECTION – NORFOLK ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTRE**

The Lynnwood building needs a new focus, a fresh start. One that will reflect Norfolk County's values as well as those of the residents of Norfolk County. It needs to be more encompassing of all arts and our heritage should be reflected in the mission statement.

The proposed new name for the Lynnwood building would be the Norfolk Arts and Cultural Centre.

In doing my research, there are some excellent examples of how a building like this can be open to all of the arts and culture and at the same time become sustainable. It takes hard work but there is no reason that the Lynnwood building cannot enjoy some of the same successes as Woodstock, Brantford, and Hamilton. Lynnwood should be marketed as a destination location through the tourism efforts of Norfolk County and other organizations.

## **HOW CAN OPTION # 3 BE IMPLEMENTED**

In my discussions with Brian Geerts, the following would need to take place.

1. The current agreement between Lynnwood Arts and Norfolk County would have to be transferred to the Norfolk Arts Council, an incorporated not for profit organization.
2. The transfer would also include the annual grant payments from Norfolk County for the remaining two years, 2027 and 2028.
3. The obligations in the agreement for providing sixty percent of the cost of capital improvements would remain.

Should this proposal be accepted and the transfer take place sometime in 2026, Lynnwood Arts would retain their \$30,000 grant and funds would be used to offset any costs relating to rent, utilities, and maintenance.

## **SUMMARY**

It must be noted that by submitting this proposal, in no way is it a criticism of the current Lynnwood Arts Board. They are a well-intentioned group of volunteers who have tried to revive a sleeping giant. They have dedicated a great deal of time and effort in trying to keep the Lynnwood building in the hands of the residents of Norfolk County.

The reality is that the Lynnwood building has not been sustainable since the creation of Norfolk County. Different groups with different agreements, have tried to make it work. The only time that the building was in a positive position is when Norfolk County rented space in the building through the transition period.

This shows why Option # 3 is needed to make the Lynnwood building viable and sustainable.

## **RECOMMENDATION FOR CONSIDERATION**

I would like Norfolk County Council to consider the following as part of their deliberations.

1. That Option # 3 be included in the discussions with Option # 1 and Option # 2, as a third alternative solution for the Lynnwood building.
2. That prior to the final decision being made on the future of the Lynnwood building, Norfolk County Council instruct staff to coordinate a meeting with the Lynnwood Arts Board and the Norfolk Arts Council to discuss Option # 3 and the viability of Lynnwood Arts remaining in the Lynnwood building based on the information provided in this submission.

### **Submitted by:**

*Les Anderson*

Les Anderson  
Founder and President  
Norfolk Arts Council

See Attachment 1 – Proposed Structure for the Operation of the Lynnwood Building

NORFOLK ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTRE

NORFOLK ARTS  
COUNCIL

MANAGEMENT  
BOARD

<b>Norfolk Music Hall of Fame</b>	<b>Artist In Residence</b>	<b>BHN Separate School Board</b>	<b>Norfolk Artists Retail</b>	<b>Lynnwood Arts</b>
New tenant (confirmed)	Existing tenant	Existing tenant	New tenant (confirmed)	New tenant to be confirmed