



INFORMATION PACKAGE - FOR CANDIDATES

WHAT EXACTLY IS RENEW Meaford ALL ABOUT?

Renew Meaford, which is officially known as the Renew Meaford Arts and Business Association, is a not for profit corporation that finds short and medium term uses for buildings that are currently vacant, disused or awaiting development in Meaford's urban area.

Renew Meaford finds artists, crafters, entrepreneurs, cultural projects and community groups to use and maintain these buildings until they become commercially rented, viable, or are redeveloped. It is not setup to manage long term uses, own properties, or permanently develop sites but to generate activity in them until a future long term activity occurs.

Renew Meaford solves the current and future problem of increasing foot traffic and revenue in our downtown areas to ensure we have a vibrant, diverse, eclectic, and busy downtown core that will provide economically strong places to live and shop.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR ARTISTS, CREATIVES AND ENTREPRENEURS?

Access to a space to work from, to sell your work from, and to rehearse or to create is of immense value to creative projects and growing businesses that typically begin without much financial support.

Renew Meaford will give an artist, a small business, or a creative community the opportunity to take a major step forward in what they are doing. Many people are often realizing a long held dream to open a shop, start a gallery, set up a studio, or take their work to the next level.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR THIS PROGRAM?

At any time, you can apply to *Renew Meaford* by submitting a **Participant Proposal Package** to our Economic Development Officer. At other times, we will have Submission Auditions looking for bright and shining talent. In both cases, a **Participant Application** needs to be completed answering our in-depth questions.

You will be contacted for further information if required or to notify you that you have been invited to an in-person interview with our Proposal Committee.

COSTS TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS PROGRAM

The benefit of this amazing Renew Meaford Program is that you get a downtown storefront location and don't have to pay rent while you are on a 30-day rolling contract. This allows your business to gain great attention and success.

There are some costs involved, to assist with this Program:

- **Participation Fee** – This fee, in most cases, is \$25 per week to start, paid to the *Renew Meaford* organization to be a member of our Program.
- **Sales Percentage Fee** – This Fee only comes into effect when your Gross Sales exceed the Participant Membership Fee you are paying during the specified month. It is calculated at ten percent (10%) of Gross Sales which are over your monthly Participant Membership Fee. You are required to submit your sales revenue figures every month and any applicable Sales Percentage Fee will be invoiced to you for payment to Renew Meaford.
- **Utilities** – Since you will be using the owner's water, heat, and hydro, you will be responsible to pay the owner for these Utilities and keep them paid current. If you are sharing a space with others then this expense will be split evenly.

CAN RENEW MEAFORD HELP ACCESS A SPECIFIC BUILDING?

In most cases, the answer is no. *Renew Meaford* matches willing property owners with great projects. We do not search for specific buildings for specific projects. However, we are most effectively able to match projects with building types: such as a shop front or an office rather than a specific building.

CAN I MOVE MY EXISTING BUSINESS TO ONE OF YOUR CHEAP SPACES?

It is very important to *Renew Meaford* that we don't undermine existing businesses and existing commercial tenancies in Meaford. We are prioritizing new projects and initiatives that do not directly compete with the viable businesses that already exist here.

Our priority is to encourage original creative projects, businesses, and community initiatives. For example, if you wanted to open a fashion retail store then we would need to be convinced that your shop won't take business away from other existing retailers. However, if you make

original clothes, or bags, or jewellery, and you have no retail presence then we would strongly encourage you to apply – you are exactly who we are looking for!

CAN A SINGLE EXHIBITION BE DONE OR DOES THE SHOP NEED TO BE TAKEN OVER FOR AWHILE?

Renew Meaford finds it much easier to make a building available to a group or individual that wants to run a gallery and have the gallery organize a series of exhibitions than it is for us to organize a series of exhibitions ourselves. In this case, we could also pass on exhibition proposals to those who are running a gallery already.

We are excited to hear from people with all sorts of plans for the empty shops – whether short term, medium term, or long term. We do expect that we will have access to a range of properties that are only available on a short term basis or for which there are no long term uses. In these cases, we would be happy to try and arrange temporary access for appropriate projects.

CAN RENEW MEAFORD BE USED TO START MY COMMERCIAL BUSINESS?

Yes, providing that it is creative, or unique, or a cultural enterprise of some kind. We are trying to stimulate excitement and life into the downtown core that will translate into your business becoming viable and possibly leading to a long-term lease with the owners. This will also generate revenue into everyone’s pockets. The only key criteria are that the business idea can’t be identically competing with existing businesses in the Meaford area. We don’t want to undermine other people who are already doing it the hard way.

Our Program goal is to offer unique, vibrant, diverse, and eclectic businesses and projects so that the downtown cores will become a tourist destination. This will ensure that our towns are economically strong places to live and shop.

CAN I LIVE IN A RENEW MEAFORD PROPERTY?

Unless the building has all the relevant council permissions and approval for residential use we are unable to let anyone live in them. In most cases buildings that are suitable for residential use are being lived in already and aren’t the ones we are targeting.

If you have any other questions that have not been addressed, please contact us. We are more than happy to help you with any concerns or inquiries you may have.

Contact:

Stephen Murray

Economic Development Officer