

Entomica Granted Funding to Keep Bugging Out in the Sault

By **Megan Pounder** - September 10, 2019



Entomica at the ARCH 2019 Bucket List Ball at the Machine Shop. Photo by Megan Pounder/SaultOnline

City Council voted in favour of Economic Development Funding for Entomica during Monday evening's meeting.

The local insectarium, which recently relocated into the Bushplane Museum, was granted \$85,362 in EDF money under the condition that they will provide Council with a business plan by March 9, 2020. This approval is in addition to the funding Entomica received in 2017, where council approved a request for \$78,000 which allowed them to hire a full-time Executive Director/Laboratory and helped them to pay rent. Entomica then approached City staff to stretch the dollars provided by the EDF funding, allowing them to then hire full-time NOHFC Interns to develop educational programs and part-time insect care staff as well as acquire additional insects for programming.



CAO Tom Vair told Council that Entomica is also pursuing funding and grant opportunities as well.

Biologist John Dedes confirmed that the non-profit organization is currently in the process of obtaining their charity status, pending approval.

When asked by Coun. Vezeau-Allen, Dedes said the insectarium would have a difficult time funding certain positions if not for the help of the City.

"I don't think there's a science centre, a natural history museum, in all of Canada that isn't funded somehow either through a municipality or through provincial or federal grants.

"We've had help from the city of Sault Ste. Marie, and we've gone to see our ministers and representatives to see if there's any funding, and, unfortunately, those kinds of funding opportunities don't exist anymore."

Dedes said another difficulty they have when applying for grants is meeting all of the qualifications, such as having enough operational funds to meet the grant requirements, such as having 70 per cent of the funds ahead of time.

The money from the City will help leverage Entomica to apply for four grants, he explained.

Mayor Provenzano showed his support to the insectarium, but also told them of his concerns in regards to their funding in the future.

"I struggled with this, because I think Entomica is great and I think that the work that all of you do is great, and I want to see you thrive and survive, so I am going to support this ask," he said. "But, my concern is that more and more costs that are properly the responsibility of other levels of government are falling to us at the municipal level. And we don't have the revenue generating mechanisms. Our revenue comes from realty taxes, which is a bit of an antiquated system, which we won't get into, but if you look at where things are going – take Sears, for instance, and how a lot of commerce is moving online -it's harder to generate revenue from realty taxes. And, for example, the Bushplane Museum, where you're located. This council thought that it was a great community asset. But the Bushplane deserved much greater support from the provincial government than it received. It's a provincial museum being supported mainly by our municipality. And I'm concerned that we're setting a precedent that we're going to continue to be relied upon to support functions that the other levels of government should support. So I'm here for you today, because I think your work has been great, and whenever and wherever I've seen you – and I've seen you lots of places, from elementary schools to seniors centres – you do great work for our community. So based on that we can throw you this lifeline and help you get through, but you really need to find that self sustaining model, because there's a lot of need in the community and our revenue isn't really growing."

Couns. Hollingsworth and **Shoemaker** also expressed their support for Entomica, but **Shoemaker** also mirrored some of Provenzano's concerns in regards to funding.

"Your passion is huge, and your whole team has the same amount of passion as yourself," Hollingsworth said, thanking Dedes and his team for the time and effort they've put into their outreach, which extends outside of the Sault into places such as Blind River.

"What you're doing is definitely healthy for our community and Northern Ontario."

Megan Pounder

Megan Pounder is an enthusiastic individual who's always striving to learn and grow. She's been a part of the SaultOnline team since May 2018. She has an Advanced Diploma in Journalism: Online, Broadcast and Print from Loyalist College. Along with her diploma, she has some freelance video journalism and social media experience. Growing up in Prince Edward County sparked her enthusiasm for all things nature. When she isn't reporting, you can find her reading, jamming out to music, or looking for new adventures.