

Ontario's #1 Weekly Community Newspaper

OBSERVER

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This Weekend

Friday

15°



Saturday

12°



Sunday

15°



MAY 9, 2024



Arts | 14



A Woolwich firefighter pulls off his respirator mask after walking out of a huge barn blaze May 3 that killed several livestock animals at a farm on Allemang Place, near Three Bridges Road. No one was injured by the fire on May 3. Crews rescued ten cattle. [Julian Gavaghan](#)

Work now underway on township site that will house a childcare centre

Steve Kannon

Observer Staff

WORK NOW UNDERWAY TO MAKE an Elmira building fit to resume operation as a childcare centre should bear fruit by early fall.

Vacant for the better part of a decade, the facility at 22 Mockingbird Dr. is undergoing a complete overhaul by Creative Beginnings Childcare Centre, which will operate the space for up to 80 children.

The 6,700-square-foot building, constructed in 1975, is being completely overhauled – the roof, interior walls, flooring, HVAC system, and the like – with essentially just the shell being kept in the renovations expected to cost up to \$1.8 million.

The building is owned by Woolwich Township, with all of the work being carried out and paid for by the non-profit childcare centre.

Creative Beginnings executive director Christa O'Connor said the organization was successful in receiving government assistance for the work.

The extent of the work needed had been well documented in a report commissioned by Waterloo Region prior to selling the one-acre site to the township for \$2 in 2022, she added.

Having arranged to return the building back to its former use as a childcare centre, Creative Begin-

nings is now negotiating a long-term lease with the township.

Ann McArthur, Woolwich's director of recreation and community services, said a 15-year deal is currently being discussed. The centre will pay the township \$8.21 per square foot under the terms of the lease, about \$55,000 per year.

While most of the costs, including all of the capital expenditures, will be covered by Creative Beginnings, the township will continue to look after the likes of lawn maintenance, given that the property is parkland.

Creative Beginnings "is responsible for all on-going operating costs relating to their operations and facility expenses such as utilities, repairs, maintenance, and winter maintenance, with the township responsible for park waste removal and grass cutting," said McArthur.

While the lease remains to be negotiated, construction is underway. Planning for that work got started almost immediately after Woolwich council agreed in November to the childcare centre. There was plenty of paperwork and other details to be sorted out before actual construction could begin, O'Connor noted, adding the site's former use as a daycare centre helped with the necessary approvals.

→ CHILDCARE CENTRE 2

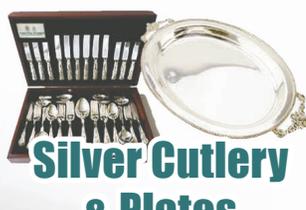
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