Committee Direction:
Staff received the following direction from the Emergency & Community Services Committee at its meeting of May 20, 2009: “That the Director of Culture speak with staff, in the Real Estate Division, respecting the status of Theatre Waterdown and Memorial Hall, regarding sale of the property and whether or not the Carnegie Hall model (in Dundas) could be utilized for this site and report back to the Emergency & Community Services Committee.”

Information:
In 2007, the City contracted Monteith Brown planning consultants to conduct a study on the use, renovation and replacement of Hamilton recreation and public-use facilities. Its purpose was to provide the City with a long-range sustainable strategy for managing Hamilton’s portfolio of indoor community-based recreational infrastructure.

One of the facilities studied was the Waterdown Memorial Hall in Waterdown. The Hall was built in 1922 and has been home to various community groups over the years. The second floor of the building has been utilized by Village Theatre Waterdown, a community theatre group, as a base for its operations since 1972.

On page 144 of the study a recommendation regarding Waterdown Memorial Hall states:

"Remove Waterdown Memorial Hall from the municipal inventory"
(Built 1922; utilized primarily by the Village theatre; $59,449 backlog\(^1\)). Seek opportunities to sell the building/property for other purposes."

This recommendation was based on the consultants determining that there were six community halls within the area\(^1\), however\(^2\), there are no dedicated senior or youth facilities and no municipal outdoor pools. The consultants further stated:

“The Waterdown Memorial Hall should be sold, possibly to a group such as the Village Theatre.”

On March 24, 2009, the Arts Advisory Commission (AAC) discussed the recommendation regarding the status of Memorial Hall in Waterdown, and expressed a concern about the possible loss of a theatre. This concern was recorded in their minutes. These minutes were reviewed by the Emergency & Community Services Committee with a Committee member asking if the Waterdown Memorial Hall was declared surplus and put up for sale could the “Carnegie Gallery” model be used by the theatre group. The Carnegie Gallery, an art gallery, located in Dundas, was declared surplus in 2004. Concerned citizens formed The Carnegie Gallery Foundation to purchase the building and continue its operation as an art gallery. The City entered into an agreement with the Carnegie Gallery Foundation under the following provision:

- That the Carnegie Gallery Foundation was given the first right to the acquisition of the real property for the sum of $250,000 through a reverse mortgage with the City of Hamilton.

This model for the acquisition of a surplus municipal facility is referred to as the Carnegie Gallery model.

In respect to the Emergency & Community Service Committee directive, regarding the Waterdown Memorial Hall, the Culture Division consulted with staff from both the Recreation Division and Real Estate Section.

The Recreation Division confirmed that they have no immediate plans to dispose of the asset. The facility is in good condition\(^3\), considering its age\(^4\), and provides numerous community groups, including Village Theatre Waterdown, with valuable meeting and operational space. Unlike other community halls in the area the Waterdown Memorial Hall is at capacity with 91% usage on an annual basis.\(^5\) A detailed assessment of actual capital repairs (the study provided a high level overview only) will be conducted in 2011-2012 capital cycle. In addition,

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\(^1\) Backlog refers to the need for capital expenditure.
\(^2\) Monteith Brown, 2008 Use, Renovation and Replacement Study for Hamilton Recreation and Public-Use Facilities, p. 108
a review of the recommendation will occur as part of the 5-year update to the Use, Renovation and Replacement Study in 2013.

The Real Estate Division has confirmed that there has been no Council or staff recommended action to declare Waterdown Memorial Hall surplus. Therefore, there is no need to consider the Carnegie Gallery model at this time.