



BY DAVID BEBEE, RECORD STAFF

With major construction work finished and minor finishing work underway, Cambridge city staff are preparing to move in to a new \$30 million administration building on Feb. 11.

Staff pack 1,000 plastic bins as city hall heads to new home

Cambridge officials move out of rented digs on Feb. 8, return to work in new \$30-million building on Feb. 11

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CAMBRIDGE

It's officially complete, but work will continue until month's end inside the new, environmentally friendly home to city offices.

The city took possession of the \$30-million building beside historic city hall Jan. 4.

"Minor finishing work" is underway, getting it ready for 100 workers to move in over the second weekend of February, said Don Smith, the city's chief administrative officer.

"It's on time and on budget," he said.

The new building is equipped with an electrical generator to be self-sufficient in an emergency. It's also outside the downtown flood zone.

Rainwater will be used to flush toilets, a living wall of vegetation will filter the air inside, and skylights will allow natural light to reach almost every corner inside the four-storey building.

City staff, who now use rented space at Cambridge Place two blocks away, will be in their new home Monday, Feb. 11.

That night, a council meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the meeting hall on the main floor of the new building, while the historic city hall undergoes interior renovations.

When the renovations are finished in the fall, council will resume meeting in old city hall.

A grand opening "family day" party is planned for June 9, the day after the annual Mayor's Celebration of the Arts, to be held in the new building.

After a year of planning, preparations for the move started last week at Cambridge Place, Smith said. City operations will continue as usual until moving-out day, Feb. 8.

More than 1,000 plastic moving bins have been passed out, Smith said.

Staff have three weeks to fill them for the trip to the Dickson Street building, 300 metres away. At the same time, they're being asked to throw out anything that doesn't need to move.

"This is a great opportunity for staff to de-clutter," Smith said.

Tippet-Richardson has been hired to move the bins and furniture to the new city offices, at a cost of \$40,000.

IBM was hired for \$12,000 to move computer equipment, while another \$5,000 pays for moving some portable storage equipment and plants.

Councillors set aside \$1.1 million to purchase furniture for the new building.

Even so, most office furniture at Cambridge Place will be re-used, Smith said. Any that's not used will go to satellite city offices, recreation centres or to library branches.

The 85,000-square-foot building is expected to serve city needs for several decades.

There's room for a 20 per cent expansion in staff.

While workers settle into their new offices, construction will continue on a two-floor, elevated glass walkway between historic city hall and the new city office building.

That \$1.88-million project was removed from the original plan for the building to give time for a heritage study.

The review was required to get approval of the Ontario Heritage Trust for the link.

Smith said the link that was finally approved is far different from the original vision proposed two years ago. Among other things, this project includes new washrooms in the city hall building and changes in council chambers, he said.

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