



MINUTES
Heritage St. Marys

May 13, 2017
9:00am
St. Marys Museum
177 Church Street South

Members Present: Larry Pfaff, Chair
Janis Fread
Sherri Gropp
Stephen Habermehl
Paul King
Mary Smith
Michelle Stemmler
Councillor Carey Pope
Mayor Al Strathdee

Staff Present: Trisha McKibbin

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Larry Pfaff called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None declared.

3. AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved By Sherri Gropp

Seconded By Michelle Stemmler

THAT the May 13, 2017 Heritage St. Marys Committee meeting agenda be approved.

CARRIED

4. DELEGATIONS

None.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport regarding Heritage Conservation workshop

Invitation to attend a Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport workshop on Heritage Conservation issues at the St. Marys Town Hall, Thursday, May 25, from 6:00-10:00pm. This workshop is useful for new Community Heritage Committee members. At least one Heritage Committee member will attend.

6. AMENDMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

6.1 April 8, 2017 Regular Meeting

Moved By Mary Smith

Seconded By Stephen Habermehl

THAT the April 8, 2017 Heritage St. Marys Committee meeting minutes be approved and signed by the Chair.

CARRIED

7. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

7.1 Heritage Conservation District update

There is nothing new to report on the Heritage Property Tax Relief program; the by-law is still undergoing legal review.

7.2 Municipal Register, Part 1 - Designations and designated property matters

7.2.1 Via Station

The process to update this designation is complete and notifications have been made. The municipal register has been updated. Council's decision to move the Via ticket office to the old station agent's office will be acted upon once the various municipal projects leading up to Canada Day have been completed.

7.2.2 Junction Station

Several committee members had attended the recent seminar on the re-use of abandoned railway stations. One message that emerged was that other communities have faced more daunting railway station rehabilitation projects. The Junction Station is weatherproof - the walls are roof are in good condition. Other improvements have happened

slowly, such as the laying of electrical and gas cables. Challenges such as proximity to the tracks and to the scrap metal yard will be overcome in time, if not as quickly as many would like. Patience is required.

7.2.3 Town Hall

A design plan has been selected that includes a flowerbed to soften the area. Work will be done in conjunction with the front steps of the library so that the sidewalk on the east side of Church Street North only has to be closed once.

7.2.4 McDonald House

Nothing to report.

7.2.5 Andrews Jeweller

Nothing to report.

7.2.6 96 Robinson Street

The formal designation plaque has been ordered and is expected to be delivered this month.

7.2.7 Public Library

The work on the front steps is about to commence aiming for completion before July 1.

7.2.8 Old Water Tower

The municipal website (Bids and Tenders) is currently requesting proposals for engineering services associated with proposed Water Tower repairs. The bid closes May 31, 2017.

7.3 Municipal Register, Part 2 - List of significant properties

Trisha has a staff report on the proposed list of properties at the meeting of Council's Strategic Priorities Committee, the morning of May 16. Mary Smith will attend this meeting. The hope is that the committee will agree that the listing project can proceed to the next step: notification by letter of owners whose properties are currently on the list.

7.4 Properties of interest or at risk (not necessarily designated)

7.4.1 West Ward School

A new request for proposal has been issued for the purchase and redevelopment of this property with more emphasis on retaining the historic building. This RFP closes May 18, 2017.

7.4.2 North Ward School site

The Planning Advisory Committee will hold a public meeting Monday, May 15 to hear a revised proposal from the developer.

7.4.3 Wellington Street Bridge

Tenders have been opened for this major infrastructure project. McLean Taylor has been awarded the project.

7.5 CHO Report

Paul explained that since he was the only representative from St. Marys, it was not really a joint meeting but their regular meeting including several of his added comments. This committee has become very active. It has hired a heritage professional to review and, where necessary, update all early designation by-laws. She will then begin to tackle a formal list of properties of cultural heritage value. Paul commented that this committee coordinates two plaque programs: the Blue Plaques which identify the residence and tell the stories of prominent historic Stratford residents - such as the young Thomas Edison who boarded near the railway station in the 1860s. Stratford Heritage also has designated property plaques. What with a very active ACO plaque program running at the same time, there are many sources of information for people strolling the streets of the city.

7.6 Homeowner letters

There was one suggestion; The property owner of the two-storey red brick house at 100 Peel Street South has completed work on a restored front veranda. Trisha will provide Paul with an address so that he can send a congratulatory letter.

7.7 Sign By-law

Before consideration of three current sign permit applications, there was considerable discussion by committee members. Some of the points and questions raised are as follows:

There is a considerable inventory of downtown signs erected without a permit and a number of these do not comply with the terms of the sign by-law.

Is this non-compliance due to lack of understanding of these terms or is it a conscious choice to ignore a by-law?

Would education and clearer information to stakeholders be the answer?

There is a pressing need to review and revamp the current existing by-law - No. 33-2005.

In the intervening 12 years, there have been many changes, including new availability of much higher quality signage made from non-traditional materials.

The Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee has challenges in reviewing sign applications and making fair comment while at the same time trying to adhere to the letter of the signage section of the HCD plan.

How can it be determined whether a new sign will obscure an original architectural feature if a current sign obscures that same area? (For example, some buildings once had transoms. Might there be a transom behind a current sign or has it vanished long ago?)

How can recommendations be presented fairly and sympathetically to people who have already paid money for a non-conforming sign? Can they really be asked to take it down and put up something else, in effect, paying twice?

Does any committee have any right to pass aesthetic judgement on another's choice of colour and design?

How can corporate or franchise signage be encouraged to comply?

Is there a need for a professional designer who would work with new sign applicants to create effective and compliant signage?

Would the signage problem be solved by having more specific sign standards for the downtown: limited choices of colour, size, design and mounting methods, for instance?

Would this sort of conformity build a feeling of pride, continuity and cooperation that would offset a possible loss of variety and individuality?

No clear resolution or answers were found for these points but it is hoped that an upcoming public meeting to consider signage in the downtown core, Thursday, June 1, may help point to a workable solution.

7.7.1 104 Queen Street East

The applicant proposes replacing a recently installed back-lit box sign with an unlit fascia sign. (Essentially the front panel of the box sign would be fastened to the façade over the entrance.) The HCDAC deferred approval until there had been further conversation with the owner asking her to consider reducing the size of the letters and the sign to be more in keeping with the signs on adjacent properties.

Moved By Mary Smith

Seconded By Paul King

THAT the St. Marys Heritage Committee supports the decision of the HCDAC to defer a recommendation for approval of the sign permit application for Spa 168 at 104 Queen Street East until further consultation can be held concerning the appearance and size of the sign.

CARRIED

7.7.2 134 Queen Street East

Meridian Credit Union proposed a new corner sign on the facades facing Queen and Wellington Streets, placed at fascia level and lit by a 16 inch overhanging metal awning containing a strip of LED lights. Photographic evidence supports the case that the existing sign obscures attractive original architectural features.

Moved By Paul King

Seconded By Janis Fread

THAT the St. Marys Heritage Committee supports the decision of the HCDAC not to recommend approval of the sign permit application for Meridian Credit Union at 134 Queen Street East until further consultation can be held concerning the placement, lighting and necessity for this sign.

CARRIED

7.7.3 182 Queen Street East

Moved By Stephen Habermehl

Seconded By Sherri Gropp

THAT the St. Marys Heritage Committee supports the recommendation of the HCDAC to approve the sign permit application for H&R Block at 182 Queen Street East.

CARRIED

7.8 Cultural Planning

There is nothing new to report regarding the implementation strategy.

8. REPORTS

Councillor Carey Pope reminded committee members that they are invited to attend a relevant seminar on May 16. Doug Griffiths will present a talk, "13 Ways to Kill Your Community", about the attitudes and actions that define success or failure for a community. Several committee members are planning to go and will report at the June meeting.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Paul's report on meeting in Victoria Jubilee Hall, Walkerton

This report was circulated to all committee members. Paul believes that the main lesson is that the Jubilee Hall was saved because people of the community wanted it to be saved. They did the work of organizing a campaign and raising funds.

Also, no community should expect an already overburdened municipal administration to carry all the weight of such projects. Volunteers must step up to make these projects work.

9.2 Sesquicentennial planning

Committee members are reminded to check the town website for updated information about plans for local celebrations for this significant year.

9.3 Doors Open St. Marys

The Doors Open Planning Committee has had several meetings. Janis Fread reported that although several potential sites do not wish to participate, progress is being made towards finalizing a list of sites. On May 17, Doors Open

committee members Paul King and Amy Cubberley are attending the formal media launch for Doors Open 2017 at the Elgin Theatre in Toronto.

9.4 Picture St. Marys

Megan Lockhart has finished her contract with the Museum to upload images containing significant structures in St. Marys. She has added more than 400 images to the website and laid the groundwork for completing an important collection of 1980s photographs of local buildings. The summer staff for the Museum will begin work May 15 and therefore it will be difficult in the next three months to find available computer time. But it would be valuable for on-line reference if some means can be found in September to complete the 1980s collection.

9.5 Sheep to Shawl

Committee members are reminded of this fundraising event for the Museum starting at 10:00am Saturday, June 10 - immediately following our meeting.

10. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Saturday, June 10, 2017, at 9:00am, at the St. Marys Museum

11. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By Stephen Habermehl

THAT the Heritage St. Marys regular meeting adjourn at 10:30am.

CARRIED

Larry Pfaff, Chair