



MINUTES

Heritage St. Marys

December 9, 2017

10:30am

St. Marys Museum, 177 Church Street South

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

Council Regrets: Councillor Pope

HCDAC Present: Barb Tuer
Dan Schneider
Mike Bolton
Note: Stephen Habermehl is the Heritage Committee's representative on the HCDAC.

Staff Present: Trisha McKibbin, Director of Corporate Services / Deputy Clerk

Staff as Delegation: Dave Blake, Environmental Services Supervisor
Grant Brouwer, Director of Building & Development

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Larry Pfaff called the meeting to order at 10:30a.m.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None declared.

3. AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Item 8.2.7 moved to top of agenda so that Dave Blake, Environmental Services Supervisor, could present information about the proposed new building at the St. George Waterworks site early in the meeting.

Moved By Stephen Habermehl

Seconded By Paul King

THAT the December 9, 2017 Heritage Committee meeting agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED

4. DELEGATIONS

4.1 Dave Blake, Environmental Services Supervisor

The limestone waterworks building at the foot of St. George Street is a designated structure. A new water storage and pumphouse facility is proposed for a location close to these original stone buildings. Dave Blake circulated the site plan, photographs, detailed plans and elevations to clarify the location and appearance of the new building. The architect has taken a number of measures to ensure that the new building will be sympathetic to the original waterworks, including replication of roof pitch, face and coursing of masonry surface, windows and vents. Committee members were impressed that these efforts have been made.

It was noted that because this project is outside the boundaries of the Heritage District, the approval of a Heritage Permit is not the issue. However, because the St. George Waterworks is a designated property, alteration to that property does require review by the Heritage Committee.

Moved By Paul King

Seconded By Stephen Habermehl

THAT the proposal for a new water storage and pumphouse building at 55 St. George Street North be approved by the St. Marys Heritage Committee.

CARRIED

Dave Blake withdrew from the meeting.

4.2 Grant Brouwer, Director of Building & Development: Infill

The Strategic Plan recommends that the municipality should investigate medium density housing in the downtown, identifying “infill and new

development spaces.” (Pillar 6: Housing.) The guidelines for the Heritage Conservation District (encompassing most of the core) have requirements for infill and rebuilds – generally that these projects be sympathetic to the streetscape and neighbourhood. Grant would like members of both committees to think about various interpretations of the term “sympathetic” because more infill development will be encouraged in the future. He gave three potential sites: the empty lot where the old medical clinic once stood on Church Street North; the vacant lot beside the optometry clinic on Wellington Street South; the vacant property along Water Street South where the Graham Fuel storage tanks were located. (Note: This third site, although close to the downtown, is not within the HCD.)

Both committees agreed that “sympathetic” did not mean replication of adjacent 19th century buildings – in fact, when this is attempted, it is rarely successful. A well-designed, structure built using contemporary materials could potentially add variety and interest to a streetscape as well as providing new residential or commercial space. Grant hopes that discussion about this topic will be ongoing. The Building Department will keep open lines of communication with the Heritage Committee and the HCDAC.

4.3 Grant Brouwer, Director of Building & Development: Sign Bylaw

Grant’s department is preparing a report to Council recommending modifications to the current sign bylaw. He has received feedback from a number of sources including a detailed list of suggestions prepared by Dan Schneider on behalf of the HCDAC. The Heritage Committee has also discussed at length the challenges of the current sign bylaw, particularly following a very useful session with Jason Silcox in June 2017.

Grant and Trisha have been working through the current sign bylaw and agree that it already includes much of value regarding regulations for signage on buildings downtown. However, it needs to be updated in several areas and brought more consistently into line with the current HCD guidelines. They have identified several issues that need to be addressed: informing new businesses that there is a sign bylaw, informing owners who change premises that new sign permits are required; issuing of sign permits in a timely manner once the application for a permit has been received.

There was considerable discussion concerning these issues. Points included allowing staff to issue permits directly upon completion of the application if the sign conforms to the regulations; issuing the permit following review by just the HCDAC committee, eliminating the need for a further review by the

Heritage Committee. Although members of both committees agreed on the need to streamline the current cumbersome procedure, there were some differing opinions on the best way to do so. Discussion will continue in the New Year.

Larry Pfaff thanked Grant Brouwer for bringing the two committees up to date on these two important issues of infill and signage.

Grant Brouwer withdrew from the meeting at 11:15a.m.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

None received.

6. AMENDMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Mary Smith noted that the minutes of November 11, as circulated, had omitted Trisha McKibbin's name as staff person in attendance. The omission was noted and corrected.

Moved By Mary Smith

Seconded By Paul King

THAT the minutes of the Heritage Committee meeting of November 11, 2017 be accepted as circulated.

CARRIED

7. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Dealt with in subsequent agenda items.

8. REGULAR BUSINESS

8.1 Heritage Conservation District Update - from HCDAC members

Other than the previously discussed matters of infill and signage, there were no further items of business from HCDAC members.

8.2 Municipal Register, Part 1 - Designations/designated property matters

8.2.1 VIA Station

The project to move the Via Rail desk is delayed until the New Year.

8.2.2 Junction Station

Nothing to report.

8.2.3 McDonald House

Nothing to report.

8.2.4 Andrews Jeweller

Nothing to report – except that the ground floor exterior has been beautifully decorated for Christmas.

8.2.5 Public Library

Nothing to report.

8.2.6 Old Water Tower

Money is in the 2018 capital budget for work on this landmark structure.

8.2.7 Waterworks Building

Dealt with under agenda item 4.1.

8.3 Municipal Register, Part 2 - List of Significant properties

A public meeting was held on Thursday, December 7, to provide information to owners whose properties are on the draft list. They had previously been notified by letter and had received a FAQ sheet. Several owners had contacted Trisha before the meeting.

Representatives from approximately a dozen properties were present at the meeting. Trisha explained the reasons for the list and its importance as part of the Municipal Register. Mary briefly outlined the Heritage Committee's criteria for recommending properties to be listed. It was emphasized that the list is flexible: properties can be added or removed from it.

Questions included whether listing would affect taxes or property value (No!) The delay before issuing a demolition permit needed further clarification. A handful of owners have requested that their properties be removed and this has been done. Trisha will edit the current list, it will be reviewed by the Heritage Committee at the January meeting and presented with a staff report to Council soon after. It will then be added as a section of the Municipal Register along with the Heritage Conservation District information and a catalogue of Part IV designated properties.

8.4 Heritage Grant Applications

None at this time.

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

8.5.1 West Ward School

Work is underway inside the school building. A proposal for rental units on the rest of the property is expected to be ready early in the New Year.

8.5.2 North Ward School site

There will be a meeting on January 9 dealing with the Arthur Meighen School property, a statutorily required meeting. (It was not requested by the applicant). PAC did not provide advice to Council but did pass a motion moving the matter on to Council with the statutory meeting. Planner Mark Stone has not yet written his report but said he would do so after the statutory meeting. After Council and PAC receive Mark Stone's report, Council will either send the matter back to PAC for advice or vote (without such advice) whether to approve or reject the development application. A vigilant neighbourhood committee is watching this process carefully.

8.5.3 Wellington Street Bridge

The new bridge is open and will no longer be a standing item on this committee's agenda. One of the molded balusters from the 1911 bridge was discovered by the contractors during the project and has been donated to the Museum.

8.5.4 Repairs to Flood Wall

Water levels and weather have made it impossible to start this project in 2017.

8.5.5 Weir

Larry asked when the wood gate at west end of the weir will be replaced and closed.

8.6 CHO Report

The main concern of the CHO executive currently is the 2018 conference in Sault Ste. Marie and the 2019 conference jointly hosted by Goderich and Bluewater.

8.7 Homeowner/Property owner letters

Paul will send letters to the property owners suggested at the November meeting as soon as he receives the names and addresses. Properties

suggested included: the new owners of the Crosthwaite house at 157 Queen Street West; John Rinn for improvements to the valances and parapet of the four stores in the Gregory Block; Bruce Barnes for repainting the facade of Eclectic Treasure.

Also, the owner of 465 Widder Street East has recently restored a century-old bank barn on the property, straightening it on its fieldstone foundation and putting new vertical boards on the upper portion. It is rare to see a barn of this age restored; a much more common practice is to tear them down.

8.8 Sign Bylaw

Dealt with under agenda item 4.3.

8.9 Cultural Planning: Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan: Trisha reminded committee members that they have all received an update explaining projects completed or underway in 2017 for each of the six “pillars.” She suggested that this document be kept as a reference.

9. COUNCIL REPORT

Al Strathdee said that work on the 2018 budget is underway. The draft budget is available on line as are the dates of budget meetings.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Request from owner, Rosemary Radcliffe, for consideration to designate 140 Emily Street

Owner Rosemary Radcliffe has made a request to have her property at 140 Emily Street considered for designation. A great deal of research on this property has already been done. Mary will draw up a formal evaluation of its cultural heritage significance to present at the January meeting.

10.2 Request from Community Services Department for 2018 "Historic St. Marys" plaque at the Quarry

The municipal Community Services Department has made a request for a plaque in the “Historic St. Marys” series to be prepared outlining the history of the quarries. This plaque could be completed by next summer and installed, 2018 budget permitting.

10.3 Bill C323

At the November meeting, committee members were urged to write or email MP John Nater, expressing support for Private Members Bill C323. Those who did so, received a reply confirming Mr. Nater's support for the Bill. Although the Bill reached the committee stage, unfortunately, following deliberations, the report from the committee to the House will recommend that Bill C323 not proceed.

However, Dan Schneider, who has been following the process closely, said that the committee also prepared a report recommending ways and means to support buildings on the Canadian Register of Historic Places. This report will be presented to parliament. Whether or not any of the recommendations will be acted upon remains to be seen.

Dan has circulated a pdf of the report, entitled: PRESERVING CANADA'S HERITAGE: THE FOUNDATION FOR TOMORROW, *Report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development*. It is a very comprehensive report and worth reading.

10.4 Closure of the St. Marys Journal Argus

The community was shocked on November 27 when it was announced without warning that Metroland Media had sold approximately two dozen small community newspapers, including the Journal Argus, to Post Media. Post Media immediately closed all but two of these papers.

Larry Pfaff explained that this newspaper has reported local milestones and St. Marys specific events for more than 160 years and will be greatly missed. He also conveyed sympathy to the long-time employees who have lost their jobs just before Christmas. Although the St. Marys Independent will try to pick up many of the familiar features of the Journal, the sudden demise of what has been a long-time community institution is felt by many.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Saturday, January 13, 2017, 9:00a.m., at the St. Marys Museum.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By Stephen Habermhel

THAT this meeting of the Heritage Committee be adjourned at 12:00p.m.

CARRIED

Larry Pfaff, Chair