

Township of Woolwich Heritage Committee Minutes

February 21, 2024
5:00 p.m. – 6:18 p.m.
Video Conference
Hosted in Virtually
24 Church Street West, Elmira

Meeting Chair: Councillor Bonnie Bryant, Chair

Attended: *Colleen Willard-Holt, Co-Chair*
Katy Boose
Natalia Smiarowski
Terry Bowman
Marg Drexler
Sherwin Meloney, Planner

Staff Present: Stacey Bruce, Committee Support Specialist

Regrets: Dianna Weltz
Karen Cummings
Kim Hodgson

Italics indicates a Remote participant.

Land Acknowledgement

Councillor Bonnie Bryant read a land acknowledgement.

Call to Order at 5:00 P.M.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None.

Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Marg Drexler
Seconded by Terry Bowman

Adoption of the Minutes for January 10, 2024.

...Carried.

Revisit Action Items from Last Meeting

Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant and the committee revisited and updated the actions items from the January 10, 2024, meeting.

See Appendix "A" for the Heritage Committee – Updated Actions Items – January 10, 2024.

List of Qualities That Make Buildings Historical and Culturally Significant

The committee discussed having reviewed the *Ontario Heritage Act* and the need for a list of characteristics to evaluate historical and culturally significant buildings to provide a helpful context for this.

It was recalled that the committee previously had a reference book for this 4-5 years ago purchased from Amazon.ca for \$5 containing architectural details like window styles but was unsure of its current location. The committee was not sure if former Chair Mark Pomponi now has this book or if it is being kept in the planning department. It was also recalled that they have a Cultural Heritage Resource Evaluation form.

ACTION: Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant to relocate reference information regarding the qualities that make buildings historical and culturally significant.

ACTION: Katy Boose to borrow and scan the Cultural Heritage Resource Evaluation Form and send it to the committee.

Various suggestions and considerations around the evaluation and designation of Heritage Buildings in Elmira were discussed. Ideas included having an architect accompany the committee during evaluations to provide insights and notes. The significance of historical events and notable residents associated with buildings was emphasized. Concerns were raised about the impact of designated buildings as Heritage Sites on their future exterior and interior modifications and renovations around preserving key architectural features.

Specific properties like the Great West Felt Co. and 2 Williams St. in Elmira were discussed around the committee's role in overseeing designations and changes to designated properties.

The process of property owners obtaining permits for modifications was discussed along with the importance of adhering to heritage guidelines while allowing for necessary renovations like accessibility features.

There was no further discussion regarding this.

Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act – Related Updates

What's Happening With all the Non-Designated Heritage Properties in Ontario?

Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant discussed a proposed motion regarding Bill 23 from the ACO urging municipalities to extend the deadline for designating heritage properties from the end of 2025 to the end of 2030. It was explained that a survey was sent by the ACO to gauge municipal community interest in the extension. The importance of the committee's request due to the challenging deadline was also discussed. The rationale behind the deadline was questioned, highlighting challenges faced by smaller communities in reaching it. The discussion also touched on Woolwich Township having 26 non-designated properties and this was compared to risks faced by larger cities like Toronto regarding the potential delisting of heritage buildings added to heritage listing registries before 2022 at the start of 2025 if they have not been designated by then. The committee all agreed that more time and government support is needed to address heritage designation concerns effectively.

Motion

Moved by Terry Bowman

Seconded by N. Smiarowski

That this committee shall request Council to authorize the Mayor to promptly send a letter to Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, with copies to Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism; Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance; and John Ecker, Chair, Ontario Heritage Trust, requesting that Subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act be amended to extend the deadline for five years from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2030.

See Appendix “B” for the “Municipal Heritage Committee Motion”, regarding proposed amendment to Subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act with respect to the removal of listed (non-designated) properties from municipal heritage registers.

ACTION: Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant will ask council to send the letter regarding the proposed amendment to subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act with respect to the removal of listed (non-designated) properties from municipal heritage registers.

ACTION: Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant will email the motion package regarding the proposed amendment to subsection 27(16) of the Ontario Heritage Act with respect to the removal of listed (non-designated) properties from municipal heritage registers to Stacey Bruce.

Urgent Action Needed – Municipal Heritage Registry

The committee was reminded of the January 1st, 2025, deadline for designating heritage properties according to Bill 23 by S. Meloney. It was explained that any property not designated by this date will be removed from the list and cannot be redesignated for another 5 years. S. Meloney also highlighted the new process's 2-year timeline for designation to occur once a property is listed. Discussion touched on the process of reinstating properties, the importance of listing properties for preservation and the challenges posed by this tight deadline. The committee debated whether to prioritize properties currently on the municipal registry and discussed specific properties of interest such as the related St. Boniface Cemetery, Church & Manse properties in Maryhill. Consideration was given to resources required for multiple designations, that property owners are suggested but not required to be notified of the heritage listing of their property and the need to work through one property at a time. The committee discussed sending letters to the owners of the currently listed properties in consideration of designation to gauge their interest in the process for screening and prioritizing properties on the list for efficiency. The historical significance of various properties was mentioned, with a discussion about and the research required for their designation. Maryhill Historical Society records were mentioned as a research resource. It was also suggested to reach out to past committee member Marg Rommer as a resource for writing research proposals. The committee agreed to focus on one property at a time based on research requirements and the available \$2000 funding from their \$4000 budget. The committee also wanted to clarify the status of some properties currently under consideration.

ACTION: N. Smiarowski to draft a letter to the owners of current listed properties being considered by the township for heritage designation to gauge their interest.

ACTION: S. Meloney to confirm the “for further investigation” consideration of the St. Boniface Cemetery, Church & Manse properties in Maryhill and their proposed designation listing status

ACTION: Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryan to reach out to past committee member Marg Rommer as a research proposal resource.

There was no further discussion regarding this.

Prioritizing Work Plan

Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant noted several absent committee members, and this discussion was then deferred to the March 13, 2024, meeting.

Creating Sub Work Groups with Subject Matter Experts

Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant deferred the creation of sub work groups in accordance with the prioritization of the workplan to the March 13, 2024, meeting.

Sale of Old St. Boniface School Property

The fate of the designated sections of the Old St. Boniface School Property was discussed. M. Drexler highlighted that the school board has initiated the tendering process for the property and the likelihood of potential interest in it. However, concerns were raised regarding the tight turnaround for financial arrangements to be made for bids on this property to be expressed given the 3-week timeline provided. Concerns were also raised about the deteriorating condition of the designated part of this property, specifically around shingles coming off. It was discussed that if a portion is designated, it cannot be altered without a heritage impact assessment according to its description of cultural heritage attributes. Questions arose about the responsibility of the property owner to maintain the designated section and whether there were mechanisms in place to enforce designation protocols. The committee considered the need for additional resources to manage designations effectively. Discussion touched on the role of bylaw and potential enforcement measures, including inspections and public petitions. Overall, concerns were expressed about the lack of oversight and maintenance of designated properties.

There was no further discussion regarding this matter.

Brochure & List of Community Designations & Descriptions

A short discussion around the committee's project work in producing a brochure from the list of community heritage designations and descriptions occurred. The committee raised concerns about interesting sites not being on the designated heritage list as well as producing a brochure for owners on how to get their property designated and reconsidered a virtual tour related to this agenda item. There was consensus around the suggestion to create a simple map or brochure with points of interest to educate tourists about 6 local heritage properties in Elmira and 2 from each village. The significance of public awareness resulting from an initiative like this was emphasized as previously public petitions have been submitted to council in support of heritage designations, especially when property owners expressed opposition to this. The committee agreed on the importance of an education project like this and discussed distributing brochures through local stores or BIAs. Involving the Township's Economic Development staff member in reviewing and confirming the brochure's content was also discussed. \$1000 from the committee's \$4000 budget was confirmed to be allocated for education and awareness initiatives like this.

Noting several absent committee members Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant deferred this item to the March 13, 2024, meeting for further clarification.

ACTION: K. Boose and N. Smiarowski to create a prototype brochure for review at the next meeting, with input from the Maryhill Historical Society.

There was no further discussion regarding this matter.

Reclaimed Materials

Old Winterbourne School House Timbers

Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant deferred this the March 13, 2024, meeting due to committee member absence.

West Montrose Bridge

The committee reconsidered preparing a letting to obtain pieces of the West Montrose Bridge for sale to generate revenue and increase their budget, pending the Region's approval.

ACTION: The committee to determine who will prepare a letter to the Region regarding obtaining pieces of the Old West Montrose Bridge for a fundraising initiative.

Other Business

S. Meloney provided an update on the West Montrose Covered Bridge Restoration Project indicating that the Region's current proposed changes to the bridge are considered mayor or substantial changes. He further described that because of these changes require an approval process involving an amendment to bylaw. To accomplish this the committee needs to review the proposed changes to be presented to council for approval. However, S. Meloney mentioned that Michelle Pinto, Engineer, Transportation Rehabilitation (Design & Construction) with the Region of Waterloo advised that they are still in the process of completing the bridge's heritage impact assessment, which means he cannot proceed with presenting this matter to the committee until this assessment is complete.

There was no further discussion of this matter.

Items for the Next Agenda

None

Adjournment (6:18 P.M.)

Moved by K. Boose.

Seconded by T. Bowman

That the meeting be adjourned to meet again on March 13, 2024.

...Carried.

Recorder: Stacey Bruce, Committee Support Specialist

Appendix A: Heritage Committee – Updated Actions Items – January 10, 2024.

Heritage Committee – Updated Action Items – January 10, 2024

LEAD	ACTION	STATUS	TIMING	NOTES
Kim Hodgson	To send the 2024 workplan to Stacey Bruce	Completed	Feb 21, 2024	
Stacey Bruce	To distribute the 2024 workplan to the new members	Completed	Feb 21, 2024	
Terry Bowman	To inform S. Bruce of website errors	Completed	Feb 21, 2024	
S. Bruce	To update and correct website information	Completed	Feb 21, 2024	Rae Ann Bauman, COR, looked after this
K. Hodgson	To reach out to EDSS teachers to determine whether utilizing students in partnerships is an option	Ongoing	Mar 13, 2024	Has connected with Ms. Cressman, EDSS Art Department Head about a collaboration with students on a digital visual arts project
Katy Boose	To reach out to printerries in Woolwich for brochure quotes	Ongoing	Feb 21, 2024	Has collected a couple of quotes but is waiting on the response for another from Simpson Printing in Bloomingtondale
Sherwin Meloney	To determine if the Township photos/images can be used and send them as a file in an email to the committee liaising with Natalia Smiarowski or the committee Chairs as necessary	Completed	Feb 21, 2024	N. Smiarowski received bridge photos
All Committee Members	To compile a list of description of properties in their own community of areas of interest to be included in a brochure and bring to the next meeting	Ongoing	March 13, 2024	Deferred to be clarified in next meeting
Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant	To reach out to retired geography teacher Warren Stout as a resource	Ongoing	March 13, 2024	
N. Smiarowski	To provide local museum contact details to K. Hodgson	Completed	Feb 21, 2024	Stacy McLennan, Regional Museum
K. Hodgson	To contact a local museum about taking Winterbourne schoolhouse timbers	Ongoing	Mar 13, 2024	
Marg Drexler	To bring thank you card to sign for Hans Pottkamper	Ongoing	Feb 21, 2024	Chair Councillor Bryant will bring the card to the next meeting as some members were absent this month

Appendix B: Municipal Heritage Committee Motion regarding proposed amendment to Subsection 27(16) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* with respect to the removal of listed (non-designated) properties from municipal heritage registers.

MUNICIPAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE MOTION

SUBJECT: Proposed Amendment to Subsection 27(16) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* with respect to the removal of listed (non-designated) properties from municipal heritage registers

WHEREAS:

(1) Subsection 27(16) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* stipulates that any non-designated heritage property listed on the municipal register of properties as of December 31, 2022 shall be removed from the municipal register on or before January 1, 2025, if the council of the municipal does not give a notice of intention to designate the property under subsection 29(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* on or before January 1, 2025;

(2) Since January 1, 2023, municipal staff and members of this Committee have been diligently working to: review the municipal heritage register; research the heritage value and interest of listed (non-designated) properties; review and research the heritage value and interest of non-designated properties; contact owners of such properties; determine which properties should potentially be designated in accordance with the provisions of Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and take all required steps to designate such properties; and

(3) The above-noted work involving **26** listed properties in this municipality is extremely time-consuming and cannot be completed by December 31, 2024 with the limited municipal resources available.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

This Committee shall request Council to authorize the Mayor to promptly send a letter to Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, with copies to Michael Ford, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism; Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance; and John Ecker, Chair, Ontario Heritage Trust, requesting that Subsection 27(16) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* be amended to extend the above-noted deadline for five years from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2030.