

**MINUTES OF THE  
AMHERSTBURG HERITAGE COMMITTEE MEETING  
6:00 p.m.  
THURSDAY DECEMBER 19, 2013  
AMHERSTBURG TOWN HALL**

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**1.0 Call to Order: 6 p.m.**

Present: John McDonald, Chair  
Paul Hertel  
Marc Pillon  
Simon Chamely  
Chad Barrette  
Robert Honor  
Carolyn Davies – late arrival

Steve Brown, Heritage Administrator  
Michelle Chittle, Recording Secretary

Absent: Monica Bunde with notice

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**2.0 Approval of the Agenda**

*C. Barrette/R. Honor*

*That the agenda be approved as printed. Carried*

**3.0 Review of Minutes:**

Review of Minutes of Meeting of November 21, 2013

*P. Hertel/C. Barrette*

*That the minutes be approved as printed. Carried.*

**Defer to item 6.1 – Request to Demolish St. Joseph River Canard Rectory**

Tony Magri was present to discuss the St. Joseph's congregation proposed demolition of the rectory building. The Diocese of London is proposing to demolish due to existing mold and financial constraints to renovate the existing building.

He presented a coloured conceptual drawing of a possible new one-storey bungalow residence with a two-car garage. Mr. Magri continued to explain to the committee how the rectory flooded on a few occasions this past year, forcing the priests to secure residence outside of church property. At this point, the parish is in process of getting approval from the diocese to rebuild the rectory and as a first step, wishes to proceed with the demolition of the current rectory.

S. Brown stated that a legal opinion on such demolition was sought, and although the main designation is applicable to the church, the rectory is included and protected by the designation and Council must approve the demolition of the rectory. The Heritage Committee does have the opportunity to comment and advise Council. If no Council decision is made before 90 days after December 2, 2013, the building could then be demolished. If the committee advises that the building be saved, should Council agree, the owner can appeal the decision to the OMB. Only the registered owner of the building can launch such an appeal.

S. Chamely inquired if the church committee had obtained written estimates for cost to renovate the current building. T. Magri stated that, at this time the committee did not have such written estimates. He further explained that the current rectory building is too large for their needs. A new building will cost \$250,000 but will be more efficient and the fact that the clergy are aging, the current 3 storey building is not accessible to their needs.

C. Barrette asked if it were possible to rebuild at the former site where the nuns were housed. What other alternatives have been investigated? Sale of the property? Renovation? T. Magri stated that they could not sell the property as it is all one parcel.

M. Pillon noted that the property on the other side is very large and would accommodate a new building. T. Magri claimed there was no privacy due to the location near the grade school and it being surrounded by a driveway. It is going to be eliminated and the parking lot isolated. It is not a required fire route.

S. Chamely, the quotations that you could receive, even a cost of \$100,000 could significantly improve the building, new electrical, plumbing, doing an entire renovation. The concern would be that the building is also a historical assessment within the context of the entire property.

T. Magri stated that it is not a viable building; it is too large for their needs so the congregation is not supportive of any further investment in it as it doesn't meet the needs of the clergy.

J. McDonald inquired as to timing, and reconstruction. What is the urgency about leveling the building at this time? T. Magri stated that they do not want a vacant building within which all of the utilities have been disconnected. M. Pillon stated that demolition through neglect by default is not acceptable approach. T. Magri stated that they have not neglected the building but have invested in it; however, the building will require substantial amounts of money to address current challenges.

J. McDonald noted that the building has a certain providence, history and it is very presentable, it is in many photographs. The proposed building lacks the historical architectural style that suits the property.

M. Pillon noted there are many options that have not been included, perhaps additional financial assistance or funding. T. Magri noted that, in his opinion, the rectory building is not historical; the church is the important building. He noted an investment of \$3 million into the church, which is where the congregation's efforts have been concentrated.

Further, he suggested that the money would be better spent on a building that will last another hundred years.

R. Honor concurred that the church is the significant building, but the story of the River Canard goes with the church and the rectory. It is important to the residents. There is a lovely building that needs some repair; however, the congregation has determined a need for a smaller home for the priest. It seems that the congregation has a mindset to only tear down the building; perhaps you can build somewhere else on the site. In his mind, it would be wise to entertain alternative use such as a sale of the property and it may be wise to expand the thought process.

C. Barrette declared a conflict of interest due to his employment with the Catholic School Board.

S. Chamely asked if a portion of the building could be serviced and perhaps a tenant could move in. T. Magri noted that the priest does not wish to have a tenant in the building.

J. McDonald, we are not here to dismiss the difficulties facing the church structure; the rectory is a gem of a building and the Committee is very uncomfortable with its demolition. We are concerned and want to find a way to preserve the shell of the building. T. Magri noted that the convent was a historical building too, but now there are no nuns. We have the contractor in place to go forward as soon as possible.

M. Pillon stated that it would be irresponsible to condone your plans at this point because evidence has not provided to show that this is the only feasible approach.

P. Hertel asked how long has the church committee had been working on this project. T. Magri advised that the priest had concerns about the mold and the possible effect on his health in 2012; it has been flooding for some years. A ten member church committee has held extensive discussions on this issue. P. Hertel then asked when contact was made with the committee regarding the issue on the table; T. Magri responded contact just this past month. P. Hertel asked did the committee of the church explore other options. T. Magri stated again, that the building is too big; it would cost 150-200 thousand dollars to renovate.

P. Hertel, the issue of asking if you had a solicitor is so you would be familiar with case law connected with heritage. The committee could also amend the designation by-law to not include the rectory.

M. Pillon noted that evidence that this is the only option has not been provided. J. McDonald asked if the church committee would be open to further discussion. T. Magri stated that Ron Burns is the chair and we would be happy to host a tour of the rectory. . C. Davies noted the need for a deferral of this topic until further information to support a knowledgeable judgment is available. J. McDonald suggested a meeting onsite with as many members of the committee as could be available.

A meeting was set for Saturday January 4 at 9:30 a.m. to meet on site with the heritage committee and the church committee members.

*C. Davies. S. Chamely*

*That the Heritage Committee meets with the St. Joseph Church Buildings and Grounds Committee on January 4 at 9:30 a.m. for comprehensive discussion on the rectory. Carried.*

**4.0 Review of New Correspondence:**

**4.1 Reflections Newsletter – Winter 2013-14**

The Committee reviewed the **Reflections** Newsletter of Winter 2013/2014 as published by the Marsh Collection.

**5.0 Review of Outstanding Business**

**5.1 Further consideration of 2014 Budget**

P. Hertel has assembled a comprehensive budget plan for the Heritage Committee. S. Brown stated that Phase 2 of the Properties of Interest Inventory is going forward. The monies have been allocated. C. Davies noted the need to be extremely conservative in our budget due to current financial constraints. Much discussion took place on each line item of the budget. It was suggested that an overall budget in the amount of \$10,250.00 be requested.

*P. Hertel, S. Chamely*

*That the revised budget be approved to go forth to council. Carried*

**5.2 i) Continuation of Contract Activity – Phase 2**

S. Brown stated that, as noted earlier, the approval has been given to go forward on Phase 2 of the Properties of Interest Inventory

**ii) Update on Placement of Phase 1 outcome on the town website –**

S. Brown stated that the Phase 1 of the Properties of Interest Inventory information can be placed on the website.

**iii) Notification to Property Owner's of Inclusion on Current List**

The committee discussed trying to undertake this task on their own. This item will be carried over to the next Committee meeting.

### **5.3 Possible student position for the Winter Term (January to April 2014)**

S. Chamely spoke to a contact at the University regarding a possible student position. Due to ongoing budget deliberations, this item will be deferred to the next meeting.

### **5.4 Nominations to the Heritage Committee**

The New Year may see an election to take place to nominate a new chairperson. S. Brown stated that we may have two vacancies at this time. This is a Clerk's Department function to move to fill them if appropriate.

*P. Hertel / C. Davies*

*That effective January 1 there will be two vacancies and therefore seek the Clerk's advice on filling same. Carried.*

### **5.5 Further Comments on Insurance Costs for Designated Properties**

John McDonald updated the committee on the fact that the owner stated that she has received no adjustment at this time on the costs for the insurance. C. Davies agreed to follow up on this item.

### **5.6 Report from the Communication and Education Committee**

The committee consisting of Simon, Chad and Paul have met and prepared a report for review; the principal item was a proposal on Heritage Week, which will be dealt with under the next item.

### **5.7 Possible Activities for Heritage Week 2014 – February 17-23, 2014**

P. Hertel presented his whole proposal and report on the Heritage Week Event. The following resolution was passed:

P Hertel/R. Honor

*That the Heritage Committee approve the hosting of a social, networking and educational event to be held during Heritage Week in Ontario, on Friday, February 21, 2014, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the North American Black Historical Museum and Cultural Centre., at a cost of \$750.00 maximum. Motion carried.*

### **5.8 Consideration of Heritage Home Page for Town Website**

This item will be deferred to the next meeting.

### **5.9 Update on Further Developments re the Belanger Paper on Urban Design and Heritage Districts**

This item will be deferred to the next meeting.

### **5.10 Leferte/Levac De-Designation hearing at the Conservation Review Board**

The Conservation Review Board will hear this case in Amherstburg on February 5 and 6. Discussion took place on the need to speak with the solicitor. S. Brown agreed to determine if any of the committee members present at the time of the designation would be needed for depositions or discussions with the solicitor, Tom Porter. The Deputy Clerk is consolidating all the information regarding this case. The committee asked that the files be made available for the committee members,

*C Davies. M Pillon*

*That all information pertinent to the designation of the 1105 Front Road S. (Laferte House owned by Joe Levack) be expeditiously collected and that the town solicitor be advised of our availability for discussions or deposition prior to the next meeting.*

*Carried*

Further to this discussion, R. Honor noted that the ACO (Architectural Conservancy of Ontario) would be willing to support the Committee in any way they can. This will be a public meeting and could be closely monitored by heritage groups.

*Paul Hertel/Carolyn Davies.*

*That administration explores with the solicitor the possible support from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. Carried*

## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 Request to Demolish St. Joseph River Canard Church Rectory**

Committee members enquired if the church committee had legal advice on heritage legislation applicable to the by-law.

### **6.2 Consideration of Heritage Properties on Boblo Island**

This item will be deferred to the next meeting

### **6.3 Resignation of the Chair effective December 31, 2013**

John confirmed to the committee he intent to resign from the Heritage Committee. He gave a brief synopsis of his work over the years, the progress made and the tasks, principally the establishment of a heritage district that remains to be achieved. He noted that the Committee is moving in a very positive direction and that he intends to remain engaged and committed to the heritage cause in the coming years.

The committee wished him well and thanked him for his years of hard work.

**6.4 Revised Heritage Evaluation Score Sheet**

This item was deferred to the next Committee meeting.

**6.5 1267 Front Rd N - Splitlog house**

*S. Chamely / C. Davies*

*That a subcommittee be formed consisting of Marc Pillon, Carolyn Davies, Robert Honor and Chad Barrette, to explore available options prior the January meeting. Carried*

The committee will be in touch with the owner.

**6.6 451 Texas Road**

C. Davies noted she had spoken to the owner of house on Texas Road. This house was one where immigrants from Italy stayed many years ago. It was a 'welcome house' of a sort. The present owners are interested in the possibility of designation.

**7.0 Next Meeting Date Thursday, January 16 at 6:00 p.m.**

**8.0 Adjournment**

*S. Chamely*

*That the meeting be adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Carried*

  
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JOHN MCDONALD,  
CHAIRPERSON

  
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MICHELLE CHITTLE,  
RECORDING SECRETARY