



City of St. Catharines

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ST. CATHARINES HERITAGE COMMITTEE (SCHC) MEETING MINUTES

Meeting of Thursday, August 8, 2013

PRESENT: John Bacher
Gail Benjafield
Heather Foss
Robin McPherson
Marty Mako
Brian Narhi
Mathew Siscoe, Councillor

STAFF: Jim Riddell, Planning and Development Services
Britney Williamson, Planning and Development Services

REGRETS: Evan Acs
Dennis Gannon
John Haynes
Calvin Jessome
Chris Loat

PUBLIC: Pamela Minns, Thorold LACAC
Cam Hathaway, DSBN (Superintendent of Planning)
Joe Weinberg, DSBN (Superintendent of Business)
Bob Dunn, DSBN (Manager of Projects and Maintenance)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Robin McPherson took the chair and called the meeting to order in Committee Room 1 at 5:03 p.m.

2. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

2.1. Meeting of SCHC, Thursday, July 11, 2013

Moved by: John Bacher
Seconded by: Gail Benjafield

"That the SCHC ratify and adopt the minutes of the SCHC meeting, held Thursday, July 11, 2013, copies having been previously distributed."

CARRIED

3. MATTERS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

There were no matters referred from Council.

4. DELEGATIONS

4.1. Pamela Minns, Thorold LACAC

RE: Outreach and Education in Thorold

The SCHC introduced themselves and welcomed Pamela Minns to the meeting. Mrs. Minns made a presentation on outreach and education in the Town of Thorold, noting several tools that Thorold LACAC have used to promote heritage conservation, including the Ontario Heritage Toolkit, optimizing the role of the Committee, and training for new members (by existing members).

Mrs. Minns also discussed the importance of natural heritage, the Heritage Canada Foundation and the role of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) as a component to heritage preservation. It was noted that BIAs need to be in touch with the rest of the City and that areas identified as BIAs may be eligible for Community Improvement Project (CIP) Grants, which can be a tool used to fund heritage preservation. In Thorold, grants for façade improvements are often offered through the CIP, where the Town matches the cost of façade improvements to a maximum of \$10,000. Façade improvement applications are screened by the Thorold LACAC and have helped to revitalize the streetscape in downtown Thorold. Thorold is also working on a streetscape master plan for downtown, and Mrs. Minns sits on this working committee. Pam noted the important of committee members maintaining a presence in other aspects of community planning to ensure heritage is at the forefront of decision making.

Heritage advocates can also use economics as an argument for preservation, noting that heritage tourism is growing 15% annually. Heritage in Thorold is publicized through local media outlets, which has helped to increase awareness of heritage activities, initiatives and events. Council is also aware of heritage initiatives through regular reports that serve to highlight positive news items. Display boards that provide summary information and photos of designated buildings are also utilized at events to promote built heritage in Thorold. The Mayor has also recognized the importance of heritage resources, and has, for example, sent postcards depicting heritage site for Christmas cards in the past. Heritage in Thorold is further publicized through awards, brochures, walking tours, a website, videos and workshops. Residents have become involved in protecting Thorold's heritage, which is evident by the number of property owners requesting designation.

Pam also noted that the return of Heritage Day (now Family day), lesson about economic stimulus plans in New York state, and implementation of a Heritage

Property Tax Relief Program, where taxes can be reduced by 10-15% where a heritage easement agreement is registered on the property, would also help.

The floor was then opened to committee members. Comments and questions centred on:

- Development of a work plan (Thorold LACAC does develop an annual work plan as part of the budget review process, but new things always arise)
- Identifying long term projects
- How to get people engaged and excited

It was then,

Moved by: Gail Benjafield

Seconded by: John Bacher

“That the SCHC received the presentation from Pamela Minns regarding public education and outreach in the Town of Thorold, and that the committee thank Mrs. Minns for sharing her experience regarding heritage conservation.”

CARRIED

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Councillor Mat Siscoe declared a conflict of interest with regard to Item 5.1.

5.1. Designation of Alexandra School

Continuation of discussion from July meeting

At their June 13, 2013 meeting, the SCHC discussed the potential loss of Alexandra School and passed a motion to begin research on the heritage value of the school for the purposes of pursuing designation. A background report, entitled *A Brief History of Alexandra Public School, 82 Henry Street, St. Catharines, dated July, 2013*, was prepared by Brian Narhi and distributed and received by the committee at the July 11, 2013 meeting.

The report concludes that the school was constructed in 1909-1910 to replace the old St. Patrick's Ward School. The building was designed by the important architectural partnership of Stewart and Witton of Hamilton. Their design represented the new style of school building approved by the Ministry of Education, which was then replacing the one- and two-roomed schools that were so prevalent in nineteenth century Ontario. The building is of some significance since it is probably the only known example of their work to be found in St. Catharines, and possibly in the whole of the Niagara Region.

Representatives from the District School Board of Niagara were present, and Cam Hathaway and Joe Weinberg made brief presentations on behalf of the

DSBN. Comments centred on:

- Background on the accommodation review process, noting that each school site was evaluated to determine whether a new school could be accommodated. Alexandra School was selected as the preferred site provided a portion of George Street was closed to facilitate the use of Catherine Street Park by the DSBN. City Council must decide in favour of the closure and use of this park by the end of September, or the new school will be built at 185 Carlton Street.
- Retaining Alexandra School and constructing an addition poses issues:
 - Retrofit complications
 - 30% cost premium to save building
 - Ministry funding not available to retain because not cost effective
 - Disruption to students
- There are financial implications as well:
 - A need to consolidate and optimize DSBN assets given available funding
 - Requirements to update doors, flooring and entrance modifications to accommodate accessibility requirements
 - Other areas also need to be brought up to AODA Standards
- DSBN is interested in retaining elements of Alexandra School that are feasible to incorporate into the new building
 - Previous new builds have incorporated heritage attributes (cornerstones, date plaques, bells, etc.) to pay homage to the history of the school site
 - Matthews School example (Diamond Trail Public School)
 - Venerino V P Panici Architect Inc. has been retained to design the new school
 - Purple beach tree to be retained in the plan

The floor was then opened to committee members, and questions to the DSBN included:

- Timing
 - If the SCHC had broached preservation earlier, would the DSBN have been more receptive to preservation?
- Architect's experience with heritage restoration
 - The architect was not retained to design around the existing school
- Opportunity to reuse the building
 - Victoria School was cited as an example
- Opportunity to restore and incorporate elements of the building as an alternative
 - The DSBN is open to incorporating elements of the existing school that are not structural components
 - There is a plan to incorporate elements from each of the schools that will be closed to incorporate into the new build
- The availability of funding for expansion to the school

- DSBN will apply for funding either way

The committee then rated the property for potential designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, using the Rating System for Built Heritage Resources. The property was assigned a score of 81.5 out of 100 points, resulting in a Priority 1 building. This means that the building is a High Priority Resource.

It was then,

Moved by: John Bacher
Seconded by: Brian Narhi

“That the SCHC recommend that 84 Henry Street (Alexandra School) be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.”

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Moved by: Heather Foss
Seconded by: John Bacher

“That, should Council decide not to designate 84 Henry Street (Alexandra School) under the Ontario Heritage Act, elements of the existing school, as identified through consultation with the St. Catharines Heritage Committee, be salvaged and incorporated into the overall design for the new school as a requirement of the site plan agreement.”

CARRIED

5.2. Reports from Sub-Committees

5.2.1. Designations, Plaquing and Ceremonies

5.2.1.1. Plaquing suggestions from the 1812 Steering Committee (Britney Williamson)

Carla Mackie, Historical Services Co-ordinator and member of the 1812 Steering Committee, forwarded plaquing recommendations from the 1812 Committee for consideration by the SCHC, including:

- Army Central Encampment in downtown St. Catharines
- Niagara and Lakeshore intersection
- Hamilton and Scourge at Lakeside Park

The plaque ideas aim to commemorate significant locations associated with the War of 1812. The 1812 Committee requests that the SCHC give consideration to these plaques as part of the 2014 budget, as plaquing does not fall within the 1812 Committee's mandate.

5.2.2. Public Outreach and Education (POE)

- Robin McPherson advised that the SCHC blog will be live in the next few weeks.
- Gail Benjafield mentioned the mural of downtown St. Catharines in the lobby to the Leonard Hotel (Carlisle Café).
- Calvin Jessome and John Haynes were thanked for their involvement in the library display window.
- The committee will begin work on the next library window display (Spring 2014), which will focus on St. Catharines' firsts to emphasize anything originating in St. Catharines. The museum is willing to assist the Committee but will require advance notice.

5.2.3. Research and Inventory

Britney Williamson provided a brief update, noting that all of the properties with buildings constructed prior to 1876 have been added to a database that includes information on legal description, area/sector of the city, land use associated with the building, construction date, and status (i.e. listed on the register, designated under Part IV or Part V of the OHA, or no status). The Research and Inventory Subcommittee is working to compile information regarding architectural description, historical description, photos and mapping, which will be added to the database as they are completed.

Britney will provide a sample worksheet as part of the research 101 training session that Brian Narhi is leading on Thursday, August 15 at 5pm in Committee Room 1. The inventory is a huge undertaking, and members that are not a part of the sub-committee are encouraged to help out with the remaining research in any way they can.

5.2.4. Heritage Districts

N/A

5.2.5. War of 1812 Bicentennial

Quorum was not reached at the last meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1. Culture Development Fund (MTCS) (Brian Narhi, Britney Williamson)

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is offering grants through the Culture Development Fund. The grant seeks to strengthen cultural organizations and their leadership, and includes arts and heritage organizations as well as

municipalities as eligible groups. The grant is set-up in a cost sharing program that can be used in conjunction with other contributions and funding sources, including other grants. Single applicant organizations can apply for up to 50% of the total eligible project costs to a maximum of \$25,000 per year for up to two years. The grant money must be used to support one or more of the four priorities:

- Develop stronger boards and advisory committees
- Create more effective collaborations and partnerships
- Improve planning, financial and digital capabilities
- Make strategic use of emerging new media and social media

The deadline for applications is Friday, September 6, and the application must include audited financial statements, expense quotes for estimated costs, partnership letter, and proof of status. It was suggested that the committee contact Ben Hannon regarding the designation of Walker's Creek as a Cultural Heritage Landscape, and that funding could be utilized to study the area. Committee members noted that the deadline is less than a month away, and won't provide enough time to compile the submission and supporting materials. The committee opted to pass on applying for funding in 2013.

6.2. Work Plan

The Committee discussed the need to conduct research on Glenridge School and Rodman Hall.

It was then,

Moved by: Gail Benjafield
Seconded by: John Bacher

"That the SCHC conduct research on the heritage value of Glenridge School."

CARRIED

7. INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE

There was no information/correspondence.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 12, 2013.

Committee members should advise Britney Williamson at 905-688-5601 (Extension 1704) or brwilliamson@stcatharines.ca if they are unable to attend the meeting or did not receive the item(s) noted in the agenda.

Minutes prepared by:
Sara Epp
Senior Planning Student
Planning and Development Services

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