

St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee

Minutes

Thursday, February 11, 2021

Electronic Participation at 2:30 pm

Members:

Ms. Gail Benjafield
Ms. Lorraine Giroux
Mr. Robert Speck
Mr. Brian Narhi
Mr. Peter Wing
Mr. Justin Nicholls
Mr. Andrew Humeniuk

Regrets:

Mr. Mark Hoerd
Mr. Marty Mako

Staff Liaison:

Michael Seaman, Heritage Planner, Planning and Building Services
Wilrik Banda, Planning Technician, Planning and Building Services

Council:

Councillor Ward 6, Carlos Garcia

Guests:

Stephen Keen, MSC, P. Eng., Associate Partner / Director of Transportation / Traffic Engineering, CIMA Engineering

1. Call meeting to order (Chair)

Chair Brian Narhi called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

2. Recognition of Traditional Territories

3. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

- The Heritage Planner indicated that there was new business regarding a request from a citizen to consider heritage status for a mature tree on Facer Street

- Chair Narhi indicated that he wished to say a few words about the heritage potential of the synagogue on Church Street and Merritton High School.

4. **Motion to approve the agenda**

Moved by: Peter Wing

“That the SCHAC ratify and adopt the agenda for this SCHAC meeting held on Thursday, February 11, 2021, as amended, copies having been previously distributed.”

CARRIED

5. **Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting**

Moved by: Robert Speck
Seconded by: Lorraine Giroux

“That the SCHAC approve the minutes of the SCHAC meeting held on Thursday, January 14, 2020.”

CARRIED

6. **Declaration of Interest**

None

7. **Presentations (invited guests)**

Stephen Keen, M.Sc., P.Eng., Associate Partner/Director of
Transportation/Traffic Engineering CIMA Engineering
Moffatt Street Second Access Environmental Study

Mr. Keen gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Moffatt Secondary Access Environmental Study with specific reference to the Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment that was conducted as part of the study and community consultation.

It was noted that the study began in late 2020 and that the City is hosting a virtual Public Information Centre (PIC) which went live on February 8th and is to be made accessible on the City’s website for a month to allow the public to learn about the project and provide comments. This is the first of two PICs. The second is scheduled for April 2021.

The study was initiated in response to public comments received by council regarding potential safety, emergency access and other issues resulting from their being only one access to Moffatt Street at present.

The project is currently at Phase II – the identification and evaluation of alternative solutions. The next phase will be looking at creative alternative designs.

Moffatt Street is a 1km long community with over 200 residences and only one access. There are a number of properties along the route of cultural heritage potential and the area is separated from the rest of St. Catharines by the second Welland Canal. Any new access will need to cross the historic Second Welland Canal. Avoidance of impacts to cultural heritage properties and significant cultural heritage attributes of the Second Welland Canal are a key consideration in the evaluation of alternative solutions. Proximity to Disher Street, impacts on existing homes and available intersection connections were also key considerations.

Within the areas identified by the high-level screening, 8 locations were identified. The screening focused on the following attributes: impacts to the Old Welland Canal Locks, Socio-Economic Impacts, Traffic Operations and Safety and Cost. After considering the various conflicts, Option 4 and Option 1C were the two remaining shortlisted alternatives.

A finer grained evaluation of these two alternatives was undertaken. It was determined that Alternative 1C is the preliminary preferred alternative solution. This option has a lesser impact on cultural heritage resources, being further away from the Second Welland Canal Locks than Option 4.

Further detailed evaluation of Alternative 1C will be occurring. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) report prepared by ASI notes that the design of the feature should be respectful of the cultural heritage landscape formed by the 2nd Welland Canal and surrounding historical properties.

Next steps include responding to comments received from the PIC, confirming the alternative solution, holding a second PIC, file an Environmental Study Report (ESR) for Environmental Assessment (EA), design and construction. The next steps also include how to incorporate heritage commemoration into the preferred design. The SCHAC would be circulated details of this commemoration plan in the future as well as the final design. Mr Keen indicated that he would be pleased to return to speak to the SCHAC around the time of PIC#2. The detailed design would be a separate stage in the process. The recommendations of the current stage would include a recommendation for continued engagement with The SCHAC regarding matters of heritage concern.

The committee asked questions about the project. The differences in topography, and costs of resolving the grading issues was part of the consideration in determining the preferred alternative solution. The anticipated effectiveness of connections to the existing road network was identified as another consideration.

A question was raised concerning how archaeological considerations would be addressed. It was noted that there was a Stage 1 archaeological impact study prepared by ASI carried out as part of this study, which was received by Niagara Region and that recommendations within the study addressed the need for future actions to safeguard and properly document archaeological resources. Mr. Keen indicated that ASI discovered a Euro Canadian site within the study area which will be avoided. Mr. Keen noted that there would be Stage 2 archaeological requirements in the future.

A question was asked about whether there would be traffic signals associated with the crossing. It was noted that this would be looked at in the future.

Member Benjafield thanked Mr. Keen for his excellent presentation.

8. Business arising from the Minutes

8.1 St. Catharines General Hospital – Decorative Arch Update Michael Seaman, Heritage Planner and Staff Liaison

The Heritage Planner provided an update regarding the decorative arch from the St. Catharines General Hospital site. It was noted that the arch has yet to be dismantled. Contractors are waiting for the colder weather to end so as to reduce potential for damage to the stone structure. Council members Littleton and Harris are championing the community efforts to save this feature. It was noted that the piece is being held together with a metal rod, which needs to be removed carefully. The intent is to reconstruct it as part of a wall adjacent to a garden at the new hospital site which would be part of a memorial to the school of nursing. The contractor noted that there is a date stone from the old site that is still to be removed and will be relocated in similar fashion to the new hospital site. There will need to be some community fundraising to pay for the cost of dismantling and reconstruction of the arch in accordance with the standards and guidelines for the conservation of historic places. The fundraising campaign to date has included a successful buy a brick campaign.

Chair Narhi thought it would be good if the arch feature could stay where it was as a reminder of the long-term history of the heritage of the site.

Moved by: Justin Nicholls

““That the verbal update regarding the St. Catharines General Hospital – Decorative Arch be received.”

CARRIED

8.2 St. Catharines Museum WordPress – Heritage Committee Articles
Michael Seaman, Heritage Planner and Staff Liaison

The Heritage Planner provided an update on the status of the project which involved the posting of articles about heritage sites in the City on the St. Catharines' Museums' word press page. The Supervisor, Historical Services/Curator of the museum had been contacted and it was noted that there was a need to source and obtain permission for use of some of the photos proposed. Some of the photos were of poor quality and better-quality examples would be helpful. It was also noted that an introduction to the series would be beneficial as would a recommended order in which the articles would be published.

Chair Narhi noted that the Public Outreach and Education Sub-committee had discussed the project and asked if the articles could be published without the imagery that required credit or permission. There was concern expressed that to update all the articles would be a considerable amount of work for the sub-committee.

Chair Narhi indicated that no structure to the order of release of the articles was anticipated. The series was written based on what interested the Sub-committee at the time. He noted that perhaps the 150th anniversary of the Welland Canal could be considered as a focal point for articles released on this subject.

The Heritage Planner indicated that he would look through the articles and provide some suggestions on structure.

Member Benjafield noted that if other members of the committee wished to write articles that would be welcome. Committee members should send an e-mail to the sub-committee if they wish to write an article.

The Heritage Planner noted that perhaps other local heritage enthusiasts such as the Historical Society of St. Catharines and Friends of the Welland Canals could be encouraged to write articles.

Moved by: Gail Benjafield

““That the verbal update regarding the St. Catharines Museum WordPress – Heritage Committee Articles be received.”

CARRIED

8.3 Ongoing Communications Problems
Gail Benjafield, Committee Member

Member Benjafield raised some concerns about long-standing communications issues with the heritage advisory committee over many years. It was noted that the committee would like to have some follow up on items that it had previously reviewed for example. It was noted that in the past some issues weren't fully recorded in the minutes. One issue noted is that in e-mail invitations some names of members have honorifics, and some have not.

8.4 Pony Mini Mart – 321 St. Paul Street
Michael Seaman, Heritage Planner and Staff Liaison

The Heritage Planner noted that there was nothing new to report and that this item would be deferred to the March 11, 2021 meeting.

Member Benjafield indicated that Stephen Remus had asked the question of what the next steps would be for this. The Heritage Planner noted that he will be communicating internally with the staff responsible for grant programs and for working with the downtown business improvement area.

9. Business

9.1 P19-066-1 (B001237) Moffat Street Secondary Access:
Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment and Consultation

Stephen Keen, M.Sc., P.Eng, Associate Partner/Director of
Transportation/Traffic Engineering CIMA Engineering

Following the presentation from Mr. Stephen Keen and discussion the committee considered a resolution.

Moved by: Gail Benjafield

“That the SCHAC receive the presentation from Mr. Stephen Keen, regarding the Moffatt Street Secondary Access study and the associated Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment and consultation.

And the SCHAC supports the recommendation that Alternative 1C is the preliminary preferred alternative solution which would have a minimal impact on cultural heritage resources.

And that the SCHAC supports the requirement for a commemoration plan in the future and requests that the details of the commemoration plan and

final preferred option and design strategy be forwarded to the SCHAC at a future date for review and comment.

CARRIED

10. Updates from Sub-Committees

10.1 Designations, Plaquing and Ceremonies

Chair Narhi indicated that he had been contacted by Mr. Howard Slepko expressing an interest in having the Synagogue possibly designated at some point. Mr. Slepko was going to reach out to the congregation to determine if there was interest in pursuing designation.

Chair Narhi indicated that he will be bringing forward a report on the Merrittton High School at the March 11, 2021 meeting.

Member Giroux indicated that she had been contacted by a heritage consultant working on a heritage impact assessment for the Merrittton High School for history of the building.

10.2 Public Outreach and Education (POE)

None

10.3 Research and Inventory (R & I)

None

11. New Business

The Heritage Planner noted that correspondence had been received from Tom Skrzyszewski inquiring about the potential designation of a mature street tree on Facer Street.

It was noted that the established practice for designating trees is that the tree should have some cultural heritage value either by association with an historical event or theme (e.g. the tree that inspired the writing of the song The Maple Leaf Forever) or be associated as part of the overall cultural landscape with a designated heritage property. The cultural heritage significance of this particular tree, which appears to be in the public realm is not known, though it is of some age and is a visible part of the streetscape.

The committee did not identify the Facer Tree as being worthy of designation.

12. Information/Correspondence

- e-mail from Tom Skrzyszewski, President Facer Historical Society re the Facer Heritage Tree.

13. Date of next meeting

Thursday, March 11, 2021

14. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Robert Speck

“That the St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned at 4:15 pm.”

CARRIED