

St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee

Minutes

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Electronic Participation at 2:30 pm

Members:

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

Regrets:

Mr. Mark Hoerd

Staff Liaison:

Michael Seaman, Heritage Planner, Planning and Building Services
Jessica Button, Project and Development Planner
Wilrik Banda, Planning Technician, Planning and Building Services
Tami Kitay, Director of Planning and Building Services
Margaret Josipovic, Manager of Planning

Council:

Councillor Ward 6, Carlos Garcia

Guests:

Rochelle Bush, Trustee and Historian, BME Church, Salem Chapel

1. Call meeting to order (Chair)

Chair Brian Narhi called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

2. **Recognition of Traditional Territories**

Chair, Brian Narhi acknowledged that the land on which the St. Catharines Heritage Permit Advisory Committee meets today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples

3. **Additions / Deletions to the Agenda**

The Heritage Planner noted that a request to designate had been received from the owner of 37 Henrietta Street.

4. **Motion to approve the agenda**

Moved by: Andrew Humeniuk

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

CARRIED

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

Corrections were noted by the Chair.

Moved by: Robert Speck

“That the SCHAC approve the minutes of the SCHAC meeting held on Thursday, February 11, 2021 as amended.

CARRIED

6. **Declarations of Interest**

None

7. **Presentations (invited guests)**

-Rochelle Bush, Trustee and Church Historian
Salem Chapel, BME Church Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad NHS
regarding Item 9.3 Opportunities to recognize Richard Pierpoint.

8. **Business arising from the minutes**

8.1 Pony Mini Mart – 321 St. Paul Street

Michael Seaman, Heritage Planner and Staff Liaison

- The Heritage Planner noted that there was nothing to report at this time and that this would be deferred to the April 8, 2021 meeting

8.2 Merritton High School – 10 Seymour Avenue **Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report**

The Committee initiated report about the heritage of the former Merritton High School was received by the committee. The report was prepared by Chair Narhi with the assistance of Member Giroux.

It was noted that the proposed designation initiated by the committee based on input received from members of the Merritton community.

Members of the committee discussed their evaluation of the former high school building in accordance with the City's heritage evaluation tools and Ontario Regulation 09/06, Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest.

Members agreed that the building was evaluated as a high priority building in accordance with the City's rating system and that at least four of the criteria under Ontario Regulation 09/06 were met by this building and property.

Chair Narhi noted that the front piece of the original core of the building facing Merritt Street was of particular significance. It was agreed by members of the committee that all walls but the east wall (the real of the newest addition and gymnasium) are deemed to have cultural heritage value or interest.

Moved by: Gail Benjafield

Seconded by: Justin Nicholls

That the SCHAC recommends that the former Merritton High School Building located at 10 Seymour Avenue designated under Section 29, Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

And That the significant heritage attributes of the building and property apply to all facades with the exception of the east wall.

CARRIED

9. Business

a) 9.1 SCHAC Committee Resignation & Vacancy

The Heritage Planner noted that Members Wing and Mako had resigned from the committee leaving two vacancies. It was noted that the City Clerk's department was planning to put out a public notice advertising the call for applications to fill the vacancies on April 1. Recruitment will end on April 16 and will then go to the Cultural Pillar on April 21 with anticipated ratification by Council on April 26.

Chair Narhi asked if applications from the original call for members for the 2018-22 term would be used as a source of potential nominees.

The Committee members wished to thank Peter Wing and Marty Mako for their valued contribution to the committee.

Member Giroux asked about rules concerning attendance at committee meetings. The Heritage Planner noted that he would confer with the Clerks Department about this.

b) 9.2 Municipal Heritage Register Update

The Heritage Planner noted that a number of properties had been identified for discussion by the SCHAC concerning potential inclusion on the municipal heritage register (non-designated). It was noted that the potential additions to the register had been raised due to a variety of factors including requests from a property owner or the perception of potential future threats to the integrity of heritage resources. These properties include:

- 143 St. Paul Crescent (Fire Hall)
- 145,147,149,151,153 St. Paul Crescent (Two Commercial Blocks)

The significant commercial architecture of the buildings on St. Paul Crescent was noted as was concerns about the future of these structures.

A question was asked of Director Kitay about obligations to issue demolition permits for a building that was or was not included on the municipal heritage register (non-designated). It was noted that inclusion on the municipal heritage register allows the City to delay issuance of a demolition permit for 60 days to allow the municipality time to consult with the municipal heritage advisory committee.

It was noted by Member Humeniuk that the committee members should be mindful of properties within the City, which may be threatened, which are of potential cultural heritage value or interest which may merit inclusion on the municipal heritage register (non-designate).

The Heritage Planner noted that he had received a request from a property owner to consider designation for the building located at 37 Henrietta Street.

Member Benjafield noted that the house was built by Albert Stark and that 37 Henrietta Street was built in the late 1920s as the house for the Master of Ridley College and that the building had been relocated from the Ridley College Grounds at some point.

It was noted that research should be undertaken on the property at 37 Henrietta Street to determine its eligibility for designation under Section 29, Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Member Benjafield agreed to assist with the research on the building.

Member Giroux asked about a potential property of interest, dated circa 1850s and located on Niagara Street. Chair Narhi indicated that it was a property that should be investigated and report back to the committee at the April 8, 2021 meeting.

Moved by: Andrew Humeniuk

Seconded by: Robert Speck

That the SCHAC recommends that the following properties be included on the City of St. Catharines Municipal Heritage Register (non-designated)

- 143 St. Paul Crescent
- 145,147,149,151,153 St. Paul Crescent

CARRIED

Moved by: Gail Benjafield

Seconded by: Robert Speck

That the SCHAC recommends that the following properties be included on the City of St. Catharines Municipal Heritage Register (non-designated)

- 37 Henrietta Street

And that research be undertaken by the committee to allow for consideration of the building at 37 Henrietta Street under Section 29, Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

CARRIED

c) 9.3 Opportunities to recognize Richard Pierpont

The Heritage Planner noted that Rochelle Bush, Trustee and Historian, British Methodist Episcopal Church, Salem Chapel and Jessica Button, Project and Development Planner with the City of St. Catharines were present to discuss and answer questions regarding a proposal from Ms. Bush to rename Centennial Park after Richard Pierpoint, who is a person of national historic significance with strong ties to the subject lands.

Ms. Bush gave a presentation about the proposal and the significance of Mr. Pierpoint.

Richard Pierpoint was born about 1744 in Senegal. When he was sixteen, he was captured as a slave and sold to a British soldier. With the outbreak of the American Revolution, Pierpoint was one of a number of African American slaves who were offered freedom in exchange for fighting on the side of the British. Pierpoint served with the Butlers Rangers regiment. Following the end of the revolution the Butlers Rangers including Pierpoint settled in Niagara. Pierpoint's land grant included some of the property which is today known as Centennial Gardens.

Following the outbreak of the war of 1812, Pierpoint volunteered immediately join the Canadian Militia even though he was in his sixties at the time, serving with distinction in major battles on the Niagara Peninsula in the war. He died circa 1836.

Richard Pierpoint is officially recognized by the Government of Canada as a Significant Historic Person. His legacy is that of a leader in the early Black Canadian community who fought and petitioned for causes important to himself, his community and to Canada as a whole. In 1985, a Provincial Plaque was dedicated to Richard Pierpoint in Centennial Gardens. The Federal Building in London, Ontario is dedicated to Pierpoint as is the Canadian Embassy in Senegal, the place of his birth.

The legacy of Centennial Park was discussed. It was named to celebrate the Centennial of Canadian Confederation in 1967. Also discussed was the importance of the site as part of the legacy of Richard Pierpoint a recognized Canadian hero.

Member Benjafield indicated her support for the renaming.

Member Giroux asked what would be involved in the renaming of the Park. Jessica Button indicated that the City has an official park renaming policy which would be followed. The process stemming from the policy requires extensive public consultation. Changes in mapping, and signage would be involved.

It was noted by Member Giroux and Member Humeniuk that changing the name of the park is a good starting point but is one of many things the City should do to recognize Mr. Pierpoint.

Chair Narhi indicated that there were other reminders of the Centennial in St. Catharines such as the history book created at the time. It was noted that a renamed Richard Pierpoint Park with proper interpretation could be a tourist draw.

Member Giroux asked if the Totem Pole will return to Centennial Park. Councillor Garcia indicated that it will and that there would have to be some sort of plaque and explanation of the history of the Totem Pole.

Member Nicholls indicated that in the aftermath of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the anniversaries of Canada's confederation be it the Centennial or Canada 150 are portrayed in a different, more balanced light in 2021 than they were in 1967. A rejuvenation of the park around the legacy of Richard Pierpoint, an official person of National Historic Significance and one of the early leaders of Canada's black community, could be received as a positive step towards healing of the legacies of Confederation that we are less proud of today. It was agreed that the renaming should be accompanied by interpretation of the legacy of Pierpoint including plaques a monument, etc.

Chair Narhi noted that the Totem Pole with interpretation would be a lasting reminder of the importance of the Centennial to the community and of the layers of history within the park and the city, which began with indigenous peoples. Ms. Bush indicated that the interpretation of indigenous heritage in the park, including indigenous peoples from the local area would be welcomed. It was noted that historically there was great respect between Richard Pierpoint and local indigenous peoples.

Councilor Garcia noted that the legacy of the Welland Canal, the War of 1812 and the Underground Railroad are three major historical features which are significantly underrepresented in Niagara's tourism and historical interpretation initiatives.

Member Giroux noted that the renaming could be a great opportunity to rejuvenate the park. It was also noted that local indigenous peoples should be consulted in the renaming and reinterpretation of the park and Pierpoint.

It was noted by Jessica Button that Ricard Pierpoint is listed on the City of St. Catharines list of significant individuals. It was noted that the City of St. Catharines park renaming policy includes very specific criteria on the basis of names that can be used. The use of names of civic or historical significance is the first priority. The idea is to pick a name that is important to the broader community that is tied historically to the specific area where the park is located. It was noted that while the City goes out to public consultation the City would be willing to work with Ms. Bush on crafting an educational piece about Richard Pierpoint that could be distributed at the same time.

Member Giroux offered to help Ms. Bush to make presentations to leaders in the Merriton Community about this proposal.

It was noted that the provision of future interpretation and information about Richard Pierpoint and his legacy in the park is essential.

Moved by: Robert Speck

Seconded by: Lorraine Giroux

That the Heritage Advisory Committee supports the renaming of Centennial Park after Richard Pierpoint, National Historic Person, a recognized significant historic person of the City of St. Catharines, and a person with strong historical ties to these lands.

And That consideration be given to future rejuvenation of Centennial Park to celebrate the legacy of Richard Pierpoint and Butler's Rangers.

And that the City engage the public and stakeholders in the proposed renaming and future commemoration activities in the park.

CARRIED

10. Items of Correspondence

- a) Sub-Item 1 – Correspondence was received from City Council regarding a request approved by council respecting opportunities to recognize Richard Pierpoint.

Chair Narhi indicated that the Welland Canal fallen workers book has now been released. Member Benjafield and Chair Narhi are contributors to the book which is available at the Museum.

11. **Date of next meeting**
Thursday, April 8, 2021

12. **Motion to Adjourn**

Moved by: Justin Nicholls

“That the SCHAC meeting be adjourned at 4:15 pm.”

CARRIED