

St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee

Minutes

Thursday, February 10, 2022

Electronic Participation at 2:30 pm

Members:

Brian Narhi
Gail Benjafield
Robert Speck
Holly Washuta
John Crawley
Mark Hoerd
Andrew Humeniuk

Regrets:

Justin Nicholls
Lorraine Giroux

Staff Liaison:

James Neilson, Heritage Planner, Planning and Building Services
Carla Mackie, Historical Services Coordinator

Council:

Councilor Ward 6, Carlos Garcia

1. **Call meeting to order (Chair)**

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

2. **Recognition of Traditional Territories**

Chair Narhi acknowledged that the land which we call St. Catharines and the Niagara region is the ancestral territory of Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This Land is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this Land is home to many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples – who share the land with us. This Land Acknowledgement is a

statement that reminds us that our standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous peoples.

3. Additions / Deletions to the Agenda

James Neilson added item 9.4 for a short presentation on the housing task force report that was released earlier this week.

Brian Narhi added a request for updates about past items that the committee has worked on, following item 9.4.

4. Motion to approve the agenda

Moved by: John Crawley

“That the SCHAC adopt the agenda as amended, for this SCHAC meeting held on Thursday, February 10th, 2022, copies having been previously distributed.”

CARRIED

5. Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting

The title of Brian Narhi’s presentation was incorrect and should be “‘Mills Should Be Built Thereon’: The Hydraulic Raceways and St. Catharines”.

Moved by: Gail Benjafield

“That the SCHAC adopt the minutes of the January 13 2022 meeting, as amended.”

6. Declarations of Interest

None.

7. Presentations (invited guests)

No presentations.

8. Business arising from the minutes

8.1 Heritage Week

James Neilson gave a presentation updating members about initiatives for heritage week. Councilor Carlos Garcia commented that the brochure did not

contain any images from the Port Dalhousie Heritage District, and that it should be reviewed for spelling or any errors. James responded that the absence of a Port Dalhousie property is noticeable and noted that this is not a final draft and that the brochure will be circulated to the group to collect any feedback prior to finalizing. Brian Narhi asked if it were also possible to create a brochure for the Heritage Permit Advisory Committee with a focus on Port Dalhousie. James responded that we would have to come up with other content as there would be some overlap, but would be happy to work on creating that if the committee would like to move forward with that idea. Holly Washuta asked if the Committee was still producing “framed histories” or if that has been eliminated. James replied that since he has been here, the “framed histories” have not been done. Brian added that due to the pandemic they have not been done recently. Holly asked if that should be included within the brochure. James responded that spacing might be an issue but will bring it forward and he also suggested that a broader term for commemoration could be used to acknowledge the work that the committee does. Andrew Humeniuk recommended reaching out to various historic sites in the city to help distribute the brochure. Brian suggested distributing them through public libraries. Gail asked if distribution could be extended to other areas such as Niagara-on-the-Lake or Thorold. James responded that he had been primarily focused on St. Catharines but could explore distributing to other areas.

Motion By: Robert Speck

“Motion to receive the information from James Neilson.”

CARRIED

9. Business

9.1 Update to Heritage Register

James gave a presentation outlining properties to be added to the City’s Heritage Register. Councilor Carlos Garcia asked James when he plans on having the property on 2 Lake Street before council, as it is currently on sale and located on a prominent corner. James responded that all of the properties from December and today are going to council at the end of the February and should be on the register by February 28. Councilor Garcia also asked if the tower on Westminster United Church ever had a spire on it or if it was always truncated. Brian Narhi replied that to his knowledge the tower has always been truncated. Brian also commented that the windowsills located on the property on 9 Queen Street are made of cast iron. James responded that he will include the information on the windowsills in the list of attributes. Gail Benjafield sought confirmation that the property at 9 Queen Street was constructed in 1853 and not earlier. James responded that the date was taken from the heritage resource inventory book

from 1996 and mentioned that someone may have done research to confirm that that is the correct date. Brian stated that it had been constructed earlier as the Marcus Smith map of 1852 indicates that the two-storey portion of the property existed prior to 1852. Gail added that in recent years there has been a growing concern over the demolition of the building. Andrew commented that the property on 2 Lake Street is no longer on the market and is two separate properties that is now known as 2 and 4 Lake Street under separate ownership. He then asked if this would include the whole building. James replied that he did not intend on listing only 2 Lake Street and was not aware that 2 and 4 had been combined, but intends on including both properties.

Motion By: Gail Benjafield

“That the SCHAC receive the information about the update to the Heritage Register from James Neilson

And that the SCHAC is supportive of the addition of the following properties to the Heritage Register:

- 180 Queenston Street
- 9 Queen Street
- 2-4 Lake Street
- 4 ½ - 10 Lake Street
- 58 Ontario Street
- 87 Ontario Street

CARRIED

9.2 Doors Open

James Neilson gave an update about Doors Open and asked the committee if anyone wanted to take part in leading a walking tour. Andrew Humeniuk asked about scheduling as Doors Open overlaps with the Canada Games. James replied that it was an intentional decision and that they were hoping to use that event to encourage people to visit other venues in the city. Holly Washuta volunteered to do a walking tour. James noted that anyone interested can send him an email to confirm.

Motion By: Holly Washuta

“Motion to receive the information about Doors Open from James Neilson.”

CARRIED

9.3 Heritage Property Insurance

Andrew Humeniuk gave an overview of his experience with insurance for heritage properties as the owner of the Brown Homestead. Holly Washuta asked if it would make a difference if the home was vacant or would there be an available discount if there was an individual like a housekeeper residing in the home. Andrew responded that with the insurance they have had since the first policy was cancelled, it has been part of the discussion every year when the policy is renewed that the insurance company asks about use and occupation. Andrew added that prior to the house having multiple people there most days of the week, there was an arrangement to have an inspection every other day and that they installed smoke alarms, heat sensors, and a security system that was connected to an outside monitor. He commented that those additions addressed the concerns of the insurance company but could be a concern in many different cases. Gail Benjafeld asked which organization or government is suggesting that the insurance rates should rise on heritage properties? Andrew replied that the National Trust's survey will address how much is it increasing and for whom and whether is it reasonable. Gail clarified asking who is suggesting this. Andrew stated that his interpretation was that municipalities are going to get pushed back on designation and part of the rationale for some of the pushback recently was due to rising insurance costs. Brian questioned if the insurance on the Brown Homestead covers outbuildings like the Norton Cabin and if any additional buildings that are constructed, are subject to higher insurance costs? Andrew explained that every year there is a discussion process about site work that is done which increases the value and subsequently increases their premiums. Andrew added that any additional equipment also has to be insured as well. He also mentioned that the Norton Cabin was previously overlooked but has been added to the coverage, and that adjacent properties have been acquired but are insured separately through conventional insurers because they are not heritage properties. Brian asked if there was going to be a further increase once the site is open as a historical cultural venue. Andrew noted that they discussed the frequency of visitors, volunteer projects, and tradespeople to ensure adequate coverage for the amount of traffic, and that it is expected to increase. James Neilson commented that in the CHO newsletter that was circulated last week, Heritage Consultant Wayne Morgan mentioned that the CHO is doing a study on this issue and will present it at the heritage conference in the summer. James suggested inviting Wayne to speak to the group about the findings once they have been released.

Motion By: John Crawley

"Motion to receive the information from Andrew Humeniuk."

9.4 Housing Affordability Task Force Report

James Neilson gave a presentation outlining the recommendations from the Provincial Housing Task Force Report. Councilor Carlos Garcia pointed out that recommendations 16b and 17 were particularly concerning and noted that 16b states “prohibiting reactive heritage designation” and not heritage listings indicating that this will emphasize adding buildings we want to protect on the registry. James responded that the wording on the recommendation is indicative of not fully understanding the Heritage Act, and that it also speaks to the idea that heritage preservation and development are two sides of a coin that cannot coexist, which is untrue as we have seen many developments across the province that incorporate heritage. Brian Narhi commented that you can see that the task force is trying to do a good thing in one respect by focusing on increasing density and downtown cores and preserving agricultural lands, however on the other hand it is going to impact HCDs, cultural heritage landscapes, and curtailing the work of heritage committees and committees of adjustment. Brian also noted that adding additional buildings behind buildings where there are already older buildings existing would create a potential safety hazard as older neighbourhoods have mutual driveways that are at capacity. James responded that the recommendations related to density and height can benefit heritage in downtown St. Catharines with the increase in people living there, there will be more opportunities for businesses to be successful and invest in their buildings. James added proposals to create 30-storey developments may seem unimaginable for St. Catharines but will potentially occur in the future and there are ways to look at that positively and to our benefit by bridging the old and the new and creating solutions for issues that Brian mentioned.

Motion By: Robert Speck

“That the SCHAC receive the information about the Province’s Housing Affordability Task-Force from James Neilson

And that the SCHAC is concerned about the implications of the recommendations in the report, specifically with regards to how they will negatively impact heritage preservation in the province.”

CARRIED

10. Updates from Sub-Committees

10.1 Designations, Plaquing and Ceremonies

No new updates.

10.2 Public Outreach and Education (POE)

No new updates.

10.3 Research and Inventory (R & I)

No new updates.

11. Information and Correspondence

James Neilson mentioned that Andrew Humeniuk and Mark Hoerdts are planning on bringing properties forward for nomination for the Heritage Register in the near future. Brian Narhi asked if there has been any word about the architectural columns that were discussed at a previous meeting? James responded that he passed along the Committee's interest in the columns, but nothing has materialized since then. Brian also asked about the status of the clean-up of the Welland House site. James replied that the owners have to provide information to satisfy the release of the demolition permit but all heritage approvals have been granted.

Councilor Garcia shared that he received an update from Director Kitay letting council know that they are looking at the recommendations of the Housing Task Force report and that the Planning Department will be preparing a report to council that will address the recommendations in the report.

12. Date of next meeting

Thursday March 10th, 2022

13. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by: Gail Benjafield

"That the SCHAC meeting be adjourned at 3:50 pm."

CARRIED