



**The Municipal Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie
Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee Minutes**

**March 12, 2025, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 1**

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call

The Chair gave the roll call.

Present: M. McLelland-Papp, K. Ratcliffe, D. Ellsworth, R. MacKay Burton, C. Riou, A. Woolley, N. Dubanow

Guests: D. Bennett

Staff: J. Davies, K. Smith

D. Bennett entered the meeting at 1:50 p.m. and exited at 2:22 p.m.

J. Davies left the meeting at 1:52 p.m.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

That: The Agenda for March 12, 2025 be adopted as presented.

Moved by: N. Dubanow

Seconded by: A. Woolley

Carried

5. Adoption of the Minutes

K. Smith mentioned that the minutes from February were completed early and sent to the Council, but she mistakenly did not send them to the Committee. She confirmed that she would send them.

6. Presentations

No presentations.

7. Reports

7.1 Council Report

N. Dubanow mentioned that Planning and Development Services has now been renamed Planning, Building, and By-law Services. He discussed an upcoming report regarding the Temporary Heritage Conservation Easement for 912 Cherry Hill Blvd. and believes it serves as a great example of successful collaboration, resulting in a positive outcome for all parties involved. He emphasized the importance of promoting our ability to work together effectively. Additionally, he shared his experience attending an Environmental Advisory Committee meeting, where he noticed many parallels between natural and built heritage. They are working on similar initiatives, such as engaging with residents and developing brochures for marketing purposes, which could provide opportunities for collaboration. There is a lot of common ground between their work and the discussions held within this committee.

8. Correspondence

8.1 CHO News

K. Smith advised that she received membership renewal forms for Community Heritage Ontario and the National Trust for Canada. After confirming the prices, the following motion was made:

That: the memberships for both Community Heritage Ontario and the National Trust for Canada be renewed for the 2025 year.

Moved by: R. MacKay Burton

Seconded by: D. Ellsworth

Carried

8.2 Many Voices

The Committee discussed whether they would like to continue distributing *Many Voices* to designated properties. The price of the books and the remaining inventory were confirmed. There was also discussion regarding whether the books and plaques should be funded by the Committee's budget or the Planning Department's budget. K. Smith informed the Committee that there are currently no books left to distribute and that six additional properties have been designated. The following motion was made:

That: six copies of *Many Voices* be purchased to distribute to the designated properties.

Moved by: R. MacKay Burton

Seconded by: K. Ratcliffe

Carried

R. MacKay Burton suggested revisiting the budget in October to discuss whether to continue distributing these books.

9. Business Arising from Previous Meetings

9.1 EDTS Update

M. McLelland-Papp shared that she received a response from Caralee Grummett, which was previously forwarded to the Committee. She mentioned that if the Committee plans to hold any events, there is an online application form. Once submitted, the event will be added to their calendar, allowing the public to be informed and invited to attend.

9.2 Ontario Heritage Conference

M. McLelland-Papp shared that the details have not yet been posted. She plans to wait until the end of March and then follow up for more information.

9.3 Decoration Day/Community Event Permit

M. McLelland-Papp reviewed the application form with the Committee and invited suggestions, ideas, or comments regarding its use for Decoration Day.

J. Davies suggested it might be helpful to note that carpooling is recommended due to limited parking spaces. J. Davies also mentioned that larger events were previously held at the Battle of Ridgeway site, but it can no longer accommodate large crowds. The police have requested that such events cease due to liability concerns related to individuals crossing the highway, which could make the Town liable.

No formal reception is planned for the event, and it is expected that no more than 25 people will attend. Attendees are welcome to bring flowers.

10. Museum Services Standing Committee Business

10.1 Presentations

10.2 Reports

10.2.1 Museum Update

Some of the current Museum Services projects were highlighted including the social media posts, new exhibit case in the Town Hall atrium, exhibit at Crystal Ridge Library, the Digitization Plan, moving

files into TOMRMS, the new Time Capsule exhibit at the Historical, summer students, and the outreach programs at seniors residences.

Roxann inquired about adding information to the library case about the Canadiana plaque in Waterfront Park. Jane noted that this very small case has two goals (to highlight the anniversary of the ferry and to promote Museum Services). Roxann noted that promoting other groups could also be done and Jane agreed to look into how all of the other public resources related to the Canadiana could be recognized within this space.

10.2.2 Museum Financial Update

The Museum's YTD financial statement was distributed. Mary inquired about the Program Support charges. Jane noted that these are expenses incurred by the Finance Dept., HR, Facilities etc. related to their staffing and materials expenses used to support Museum Services. Mary inquired if the Museum has the opportunity to charge other departments when they provide support. Jane responded no, since this accounting process only applies to certain departments. Councillor Dubanow offered to inquire further into this.

10.3 Correspondence

10.4 New Business

11. Municipal Heritage Standing Committee Business

11.1 Presentations

11.2 Reports

11.2.1 3837 Netherby Road - Evaluation

The Committee reviewed the report completed by ARA, which determined that the property meets four criteria under *O. Reg 9/06* of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Based on this, the Committee agreed that the property is worthy of designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The following resolution was made:

That: *the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee recommends the designation of 3837 Netherby Road, Fort Erie, for architectural, historical, and contextual attributes and reason, under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.*

Moved by: R. MacKay Burton
Seconded by: M. McLelland-Papp

Carried

11.3 Correspondence

11.4 New Business

11.4.1 3798 West Main Street - Stairs

K. Smith informed the Committee that Infrastructure had reached out regarding a set of concrete stairs within the road allowance in front of the property. This issue was previously brought to the Committee by R. Shugan, where it was determined that the Committee was not interested in preserving the stairs, as they are not registered as heritage artifacts. Due to an upcoming infrastructure project, the stairs need to be relocated and will be temporarily placed in Stevensville Mini Park. However, they cannot remain there permanently. Infrastructure has asked the Committee if they wish to keep the stairs, and if so, where they should be placed, or if they should advise the contractor to dispose of them. A local resident has mentioned that the stairs were historically used as a transportation stop for locals who worked at sawmills in the area.

The Committee discussed the stairs but noted no historical information beyond the local resident's knowledge. They expressed interest in preserving the stairs and moving them to Stevensville Memorial Park, though K. Smith clarified that this may not be possible as the Parks and Facilities Manager has indicated they cannot be a permanent fixture in another park.

R. MacKay Burton disagreed with preserving them, citing potential costs to move and display them with signage about their historical background. She argued that relocating them would remove them from their original context, and it might be better to dispose of them, given the lack of detailed history.

N. Dubanow suggested it might be worthwhile to keep the stairs and display them in Memorial Park, perhaps in a flower bed or another attractive setting.

The Committee passed the following resolution:

That: the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee requests that Infrastructure Services move the stairs from the road allowance in front of 3798 West Main Street to Stevensville Memorial Park for passive display.

Moved by: M. McLelland-Papp

Seconded by: N. Dubanow

Carried

It is noted that R. MacKay Burton was apposed.

11.4.2 Tax Rebate Inspections

K. Smith reported that several applications for the program have been received and inquired if anyone was available to assist with the

inspections. K. Ratcliffe confirmed his availability, and M. McLelland-Papp mentioned she is available on March 24th or 26th.

11.5 Business Arising from Previous Meetings

11.5.1 Pilot Project

The Committee agreed to defer this agenda item until their next meeting.

11.5.2 3718 Netherby Road

M. McLelland-Papp shared her intention to have the property and surrounding area designated as a Heritage Conservation District. This would include the cemetery, parish hall, the manse, the school, and the church, as it forms a unique cluster of buildings in Fort Erie. She emphasized that this cluster is distinct not only in Fort Erie but in Ontario, with very few similar sites remaining.

The Committee discussed that this proposal would need to go back to Council for approval and funding.

N. Dubanow pointed out that creating a heritage district involves much more work than designating a single property. He explained that it requires substantial supporting documentation and is a more complex process. He suggested that there might be more interest in areas like Crystal Beach or Ridgeway, where costs may be more feasible, but ultimately, the Committee should provide Council with its best advice.

M. McLelland-Papp proposed that the Committee make two motions: one to designate the property at 3718 Netherby Road and another for Council to consider designating the surrounding area as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

K. Smith confirmed there are no issues with making two motions but cautioned the Committee about the significant costs involved. She explained that the process would require defining a study area, preparing a Heritage Conservation District plan, conducting public consultations, and ensuring ongoing maintenance of the plan.

N. Dubanow noted that additional information regarding the costs and work involved would need to be provided by staff.

R. MacKay Burton stressed the historical importance of the intersection, stating that Stevensville and Snyder were much more significant than Ridgeway or Crystal Beach in the past. She highlighted the several important churches in the area.

The Committee made the following motions:

The Committee reviewed the report completed by ARA, which determined that the property meets five criteria under O. Reg 9/06 of

the Ontario Heritage Act. Based on this, the Committee agreed that the property is worthy of designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. The following resolution was made:

That: *the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee recommends the designation of 3718 Netherby Road, Fort Erie, for architectural, historical, and contextual attributes under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.*

Moved by: M. McLelland-Papp
Seconded by: R. MacKay Burton

Carried

That: *the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee recommends that the cluster of buildings in Snyder, which is unique to Fort Erie and rare in Ontario, including the church, parish hall, manse, and school, be pursued as a Heritage Conservation District.*

Moved by: M. McLelland-Papp
Seconded by: N. Dubanow

Carried

11.5.3 325 Niagara Blvd.

D. Bennett expressed his concerns to the Committee regarding the recommendation to designate 325 Niagara Blvd. He asked why the Committee is interested in designating the property, stating that both the building and its heritage are already being protected. He pointed out that there are photos and write-ups framed within the building to acknowledge its historical significance, and a large sign in front of the building identifies its importance. He emphasized that the property is already being recognized.

He also mentioned that the building is the third addition to the site, as required, and that it serves as an active parish with the building being an important resource. If the parish needs to make changes to the building, he believes those needs should take precedence over preserving the building's appearance. He clarified that the building is there to serve the community, not the other way around. He concluded by expressing his confusion over the situation.

M. McLelland-Papp explained that there is a misunderstanding about the purpose of designation. She clarified that the Committee is not trying to interfere with how the congregation uses the church; rather, their goal is to protect the building from being demolished. She pointed out that, in changing times, there is always the possibility that the church could be sold, and a developer might decide to tear it down to capitalize on the valuable waterfront property. The Committee's intention is to safeguard and preserve the church for the Town of Fort Erie, as it has been a landmark for many years. She also noted that

the church meets four criteria under the Act, which is very rare and further underscores its significance.

D. Bennett raised a concern about the structure of the Ontario Heritage Act, noting that it could be problematic because the Minister has the authority to halt any alterations. He emphasized that if alterations are necessary, the building needs to be able to change. He argued that the fact the church is a landmark is secondary, as it was designed to be recognizable as a place of worship, not as a monument or landmark. If the ministry were ever to leave, he stated, the building would just be a building with no greater significance.

M. McLelland-Papp responded by explaining that the Committee works with property owners to allow alterations when needed. She also pointed out that historically significant individuals are buried in the church's cemetery, adding another layer of historical importance.

N. Dubanow acknowledged D. Bennett's perspective but clarified that the Committee's concern is not about how the church is currently used or the needs of the congregation, but rather about preserving the building's heritage and its role in the community. Even if the ministry were to cease, the building's historical significance would remain part of the Committee's mandate. He stressed that the Committee is not trying to interfere with the building's use but is focused on protecting its heritage aspects. He suggested having a discussion on how to address D. Bennett's concerns while also fulfilling the Committee's goal of heritage preservation.

R. MacKay Burton noted the Heritage Grant Program that is available.

There was discussion about why the newer addition was not included.

D. Bennett suggested that the wording of the by-law include a provision stating that any alterations to the building be at the discretion of the Corporation of the Parish, in accordance with the Diocese of Niagara, as it is the Diocese's building and the parish are the caretakers. He emphasized that the parish is legally responsible for what happens at St. Paul's. If the parish ever stops using the building, the Corporation would no longer have any say, but the building would remain. He proposed that this approach would address the needs of both the parish and the Town.

N. Dubanow asked K. Smith if there was a way to write the by-law to alleviate their concerns, noting that the parish has demonstrated its commitment to protecting the building's heritage, while the Committee is concerned about the future of the building if it is no longer used for ministry. He inquired whether a compromise could be reached, as both parties share the same goal, but a solution needs to be found to satisfy both sides.

K. Smith responded that it is could be possible to do this, but she would first need to discuss it with the Town's Solicitor, Phil Riley.

12. New Business

D. Ellsworth shared that he received recognition for keeping his farm in the family for 150 years. The Committee discussed other properties that may be eligible and suggested reaching out to 164 Point Abino Road South.

13. Next Meeting Date

April 9, 2025

14. Adjournment

That: The Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee adjourns at 3:05 p.m.

Moved by: M. McLelland-Papp

Seconded by: D. Ellsworth

Carried