



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

**June 11, 2025, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 1**

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

The Chair gave the roll call.

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

Guests: D. Horne, D. Konstantinos

Staff: K. Smith, J. Davies, E. Terry, A. Hair, C. Cameron

E. Terry and A. Hair left the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

D. Horne left at 1:57 p.m.

D. Konstantinos joined the meeting at 1:10 p.m. and left at 1:57 p.m.

N. Dubanow joined the meeting at 1:43 p.m.

C. Cameron joined the meeting at 1:46 p.m. and left at 1:49 p.m.

J. Davies left the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

That: The Agenda for June 11, 2025 be adopted as presented.

Moved by: D. Ellsworth
Seconded by: R. MacKay Burton
Carried

5. Adoption of the Minutes

That: The Minutes for May 14, 2025, be adopted as amended.

Moved by: R. MacKay Burton
Seconded by: K. Ratcliffe
Carried

6. Presentations

6.1 Introduction of Clare Cameron

This item was not addressed due to the scheduling of the Press Conference at Town Hall.

6.2 Official Plan Update

A. Hair gave a presentation on the new Official Plan, outlining its purpose, key components, and the current status of the process within the Town. He also went over the requests and comments received from the Committee.

The committee's first point, raised by A. Hair, was to include additional detail in the Official Plan to more accurately and comprehensively reflect Fort Erie's historical background. A. Hair confirmed that this information was provided by J. Davies and forwarded to our consultant, WSP, for inclusion.

The second question concerned the decision not to carry forward the moveable and intangible heritage. He explained that these were removed due to changes in provincial policies and legislation, including the *Ontario Heritage Act* and the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*. He noted that while we could collaborate with WSP to develop encouragement policies, enforcement would not be possible.

R. MacKay Burton sought clarification on whether the Official Plan addresses only land use planning or if it also includes other heritage features typically managed by Museum Services. A. Hair clarified that the Official Plan is the Town's long-range land use planning document and does not cover Museum Services.

R. MacKay Burton noted that under the Vision and Guiding Principles in Section B 3.2, heritage is mentioned through artifacts, archives, and intangible resources, but this is not reflected elsewhere, as the rest of the plan focuses on land use planning. She pointed out that if the plan addresses only land use planning, Museum Services should not be included in the vision. J. Davies requested that the wording referring to Museum Services be removed from the introductory paragraph in Section E.

J. Davies asked that Section 11.5 and 11.6 be reinstated.

A. Hair discussed the development charges exemption for museums. R. MacKay Burton asked how often development charge studies are conducted and when the next one is scheduled. E. Terry confirmed that the next study will take place in four years. R. MacKay Burton emphasized that the Town needs to consider how it will address funding for Museum Services. E. Terry confirmed that this is not something addressed through the Official Plan, but could potentially be considered under the Community Benefits Charges. He noted that this would be a takeaway for staff to review further.

R. MacKay Burton pointed out that the new plan does not include any mention of heritage trees.

A. Hair reviewed the next steps, noting that the public meeting took place this past Monday. Comments received will be incorporated, and a comments matrix will be presented to Council in August.

E. Terry added that feedback is being received from several stakeholders, and staff are working to incorporate it as effectively as possible. The intent is to review all input, both from today's discussion and other sources, with the project team, and then circulate a revised version for further review.

M. McLelland-Papp asked if the updated material could be brought back to their meeting on July 9. E. Terry responded that they would review the timing, but it will likely need to be circulated by email. He assured the committee that they will be kept informed throughout the process.

7. Reports

7.1 Council Report

N. Dubanow spoke about the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Conference, highlighting one event held at the Milwaukee Historical Society, which is an old bank that had been converted into a multi-unit space while retaining many of its historical features. He noted it as an excellent example of adaptive reuse. The surrounding area also demonstrated how new architecture can be successfully integrated with older buildings.

He then discussed the presentation of the Official Plan, the heritage elements currently included, and the next steps in the process. M. McLelland-Papp added that the plan does not include enough detail on preserving downtown Ridgeway and emphasized that this area is important to highlight. R. MacKay Burton also noted that the area should be referred to as "Ridgeway" and not "Gorham."

The Committee also had a brief discussion about the recent press conference regarding the future of health care in Fort Erie and Port Colborne.

8. Correspondence

8.1 Official Plan Concerns, Questions, & Timeline

K. Ratcliffe noted that the new Official Plan is significantly shorter than the previous version. M. McLelland-Papp reiterated that this reduction is a result of changes in provincial legislation, as previously explained by A. Hair and E. Terry.

The Committee again discussed how Museum Services should be incorporated into the Official Plan.

9. Business Arising from Previous Meetings

9.1 2025 Budget Reduction

The Committee discussed the budget being reduced from \$2,000 to \$250 without their knowledge. They explained the reasons why a \$2,000 budget is necessary and expressed that \$250 is insufficient. They asked Councillor Dubanow to help determine what caused such a drastic reduction. Councillor Dubanow said he would raise the issue with Chris McQueen.

9.2 Decoration Day

M. McLelland-Papp provided an update on the event, noting that the wreath was displayed for four days and that the event was a success.

K. Ratcliffe highlighted that next year marks the 160th anniversary and suggested that something extra should be planned. The Committee emphasized the need for greater recognition in Fort Erie as the home of the battle that was a catalyst for Confederation. Concern was expressed that by not promoting this, the Town is distancing itself from an important part of the national story. The Committee agreed that this is likely something J. Davies or C. Cameron could explore or include in the work plan.

M. McLelland-Papp mentioned that one of the event attendees was a reenactor and that Niagara Parks is planning a reenactment in 2026 at the old fort. N. Dubanow asked K. Smith to identify the appropriate Town staff member to contact Niagara Parks to explore potential partnership opportunities.

The Committee made the following motion:

That: *the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee recommends celebrating the 160th anniversary of the Fenian Raids in a grander format, possibly in partnership with Niagara Parks, to recognize its significance to the Town. The celebration could include reenactments of the skirmishes that occurred throughout Fort Erie when the Fenians retreated.*

Moved by: R. MacKay Burton
Seconded by: K. Ratcliffe

Carried

10. Museum Services Standing Committee Business

No Museum Services Meeting Scheduled

10.1 Presentations

10.2 Reports

10.2.1 Museum Update

10.2.2 Museum Financial Update

10.3 Correspondence

10.4 New Business

11. Municipal Heritage Standing Committee Business

11.1 Presentations

11.1.1 848 Garrison Road - NPG

D. Horne reviewed the peer review completed by Leah Wallace, focusing on the specific points that were raised. She noted that the cover letters for the individuals Leah requested will be provided.

Addressing the second comment, D. Horne explained that adjacent cultural heritage resources located within 2 km were mapped, and she is confident there will be no negative impacts to these sites. She clarified that the Provincial Policy Statement requires the assessment of impacts on adjacent designated properties. However, it defines "adjacent" as being contiguous, which is not the case here. Therefore, they believe this requirement has been met.

Regarding the third comment, which suggested including a scoped Ontario Regulation 9/06 analysis to confirm that the heritage attributes are correctly and clearly identified, D. Horne explained the distinction between a Heritage Impact Assessment and a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report. She noted that this type of report does not require a 9/06 analysis.

The fourth comment involved a request for preliminary urban design concepts, including elements such as landscaping and buffering. D. Horne responded that, under the current *Planning Act*, such requests are no longer permitted.

D. Horne addressed the final comment regarding mothballing, explaining the process and outlining the protective measures that have already been implemented, as well as those planned for the future.

11.2 Reports

11.3 Correspondence

11.3.1 477 Ridge Road North

K. Smith reported that the property owner is interested in meeting with the Committee to discuss his proposal for the property. After consideration, the Committee agreed that, given the property's history and its status with the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), the matter should be handled by Staff and Council.

The Committee made the following motion:

That: *the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee recommends that 477 Ridge Road North be referred back to the Counsel for a legal opinion.*

Moved by: R. MacKay Burton

Seconded by: M. McLelland-Papp

Carried

11.4 New Business

11.4.1 3957 Rebstock Road

K. Ratcliffe emphasized the historical significance of the property and suggested that any development there should be named after John E. Rebstock. N. Dubanow noted that since it is an infill project rather than a major development, a plaque might be a more appropriate way to honor the history.

The Committee made the following motion:

That: *the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee recommends that if the project is to be named, it should be called John E. Rebstock. If the project is not named, the developer should install a plaque to acknowledge that this was the home of John E. Rebstock, the founder of Crystal Beach.*

Moved by: M. McLelland-Papp

Seconded by: D. Ellsworth

Carried

R. MacKay Burton noted her understanding that the naming committee does not permit naming places after individuals. N. Dubanow clarified that there is an approved list of names and added that the Mayor is encouraging the use of this list.

11.4.2 3967 Rebstock Road

K. Ratcliffe explained that the property is located right on the property line, and any construction there would likely encroach. The Committee discussed whether the property holds historical significance and if it should be researched. They ultimately determined that it is not worth pursuing research at this time.

11.5 Business Arising from Previous Meetings

11.5.1 3798 West Main Street Stairs

K. Smith explained that the Committee previously made a motion to Council, which was endorsed, requesting that Infrastructure Services relocate the stairs at Stevensville Memorial Park. However, Parks staff indicated that this is not feasible. If the stairs hold historical significance, the Museum should take responsibility for them, but they also confirmed that this is not possible. K. Smith added that the current property owner wishes to keep the stairs, and if the Committee agrees, the process to donate the stairs to the owner would proceed with the Town's Solicitor.

The Committee made the following motion:

That: the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee recommends that the stairs in the road allowance in front of 3798 West Main Street be donated by the Town to the property owner of 3798 West Main Street.

Moved by: M. McLelland-Papp

Seconded by: N. Dubanow

Carried

11.5.2 576 Ridge Road North Update

K. Ratcliffe shared photos of the property and its current condition. The Committee discussed the vandalism that has occurred.

K. Smith provided an update from the Council meeting, noting that the Heritage Permit for the demolition of the additions was endorsed by Council. She also explained that instead of boarding up the windows and doors, a fence will be installed. This decision was made because boarding up the windows and doors could cause more damage to the remaining façade features, a view supported by the Town's Chief Building Official, Keegan Gennings.

M. McLelland-Papp emphasized the importance of boarding up windows and doors and requested that the Town develop a policy on this matter. N. Dubanow suggested inviting Keegan Gennings to the next Committee meeting to explain the process, allowing the Committee to better understand what is involved and whether this solution is feasible or if better options exist. There are many conflicting

pieces of legislation involved, and we want to make sure we are proceeding correctly.

12. New Business

R. MacKay Burton explained that the Museum has a new exhibit called the Time Capsule Exhibit and wanted to ensure people are aware of it.

13. Next Meeting Date

July 9, 2025

14. Adjournment

That: The Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee adjourns at 3:12 p.m.