

Township of Woolwich Heritage Committee Minutes

Oct 9, 2024
4:59 p.m. – 6:37 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting
Hosted in Council Chambers and on Zoom
24 Church Street West, Elmira

Meeting Chair: Councillor Bonnie Bryant, Chair

Attended: Katy Boose
Dianna Weltz
Marg Drexler

Staff Present: Stacey Bruce, Committee Support Specialist
Sherwin Meloney, Planner

Regrets: Colleen Willard-Holt, Co-Chair
Natalia Smiarowski
Kim Hodgson

Italics indicates a virtual participant.

Call to Order at 4:59 P.M.

Land Acknowledgement

Chair Councillor Bonnie Bryant read a land acknowledgment.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None.

Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Katie Boose
Seconded by Dianna Weltz

That the minutes of Sept 11, 2024, be adopted as presented.

...Carried.

Sept 11, 2024 Action Item Review

The action items from the September 11, 2024 meeting were not received in detail by the committee, as many are ongoing and several committee members were absent.

Of special note, an update was provided on making a potential request to the Township to apply on behalf of the committee for Ontario Trillium Grants in the future. It was noted that the Save the Middlebrook Bridge group and a Centre Wellington Councillor may have relevant information for the committee from their grant application experience to seek out. The committee also discussed the Township's available grants and potentially making future special requests to council for funding.

ACTION: K. Boose will explore general grant opportunities for the committee.

It was also mentioned that, Roger Miller has accepted the invitation to attend the committee's November 13, 2024, meeting. The committee discussed potential presentation topics for R. Miller, noting his expertise in genealogy and many other heritage subjects.

ACTION: D. Weltz will coordinate with Roger Miller to present on Elmira's heritage and architecture at the November 13, 2024, meeting and arrange for a heritage-expert realtor to attend a meeting in 2025.

An update was provided that Stacey Bruce has obtained the picture of the queen formerly displayed in council chambers for the committee.

Work Plan

An update was provided that the planned digital slide display at the WMC can only accommodate a single stand-alone slide from the prepared digital slideshow materials.

Marg Drexler also presented a rough draft write-up on St. Boniface Church, Maryhill, with ten related photos, highlighting the significance of its altars, pulpit, and stained-glass windows. The hand-carving and transportation of the altars to the church by horse-drawn wagons, as well as their later painting was described. The committee raised questions about the Church's unknown stained-glass artisan. The committee discussed this heritage designation and decided to designate the entire church, manse and cemetery over designating individual items in the church. The unique limestone of the church building that is over a billion years old, containing crustacean fossils from Eastern Ontario, was discussed, alongside related research on this by Peter Russell from the University of Waterloo. Letters of support for this designation were noted from the Maryhill Historical Society, Knights of Columbus, and Catholic Women's League. The need for additional architectural details to prepare a cultural heritage evaluation report for these properties was identified by committee members, and provincial guidelines and designation steps were clarified by staff.

It was noted that the Woolwich Township Council was previously invited to tour the St. Boniface Church, Manse and Cemetery.

ACTION: M. Drexler to research the stained-glass artisan and complete additional details for the Maryhill St. Boniface Church report.

ACTION: All committee members to review the draft report on the St. Boniface Church, Maryhill and provide feedback for the November 13, 2024, meeting

ACTION: D Weltz to visit the St. Boniface Church, Manse and Cemetery to take additional photos for the preparation of its Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

The committee discussed the completion of further recent research on the Elmira Carnegie Library and the preparation of cultural heritage evaluation reports for both the library and St.

Boniface Church and Manse. The committee discussed next steps for completing these heritage designations, include drafting by-laws considering heritage attributes.

ACTION: Sherwin Meloney to circulate example by-laws for heritage designation preparations.

ACTION: M. Drexler to draft a heritage designation by-law for the St. Boniface Church and Manse.

It was determined that a subgroup of committee members will meet after 2:15 p.m. on December 11, 2024, to collaborate for the preparation of the Carnegie Library Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report.

The committee was encouraged to utilize their unused annual funding for activities.

The committee revisited locating missing framed heritage committee pictures last seen at Wilmont Bankers Day Event. The committee noted that the Planning Department was the last known location of the pictures, but that the Township's archives could also be searched. The involvement of a past community member who took the pictures and the possibility of their storage in the regional archives were also discussed.

ACTION: S. Bruce to follow up with the Township's Planning Department regarding the location of missing framed heritage committee pictures.

The committee also addressed the West Montrose Bridge time capsule, scheduled to be opened in 2100, confirming no plans to open it early, as well as M. Pinto's request for clarification on its location.

Preparation of Work Plan Report & Presentation to Council

The committee discussed preparing a simple presentation to council, similar to last year's.

Moved by K. Boose

Seconded by Dianna Weltz

"Be it resolved that the Woolwich Township Heritage Committee respectfully requests \$2,000 from the Woolwich Township Council to support the committee's education, digital media, and heritage designation initiatives. The committee recognizes current economic challenges and commits to exploring fundraising, alternative funding sources, and collecting donations to address additional expenses, alongside potential future funding requests to Council if needed to complete heritage designations"

The committee reviewed the deputy clerk's suggestion not to request additional funding for next year due to unutilized funds from this year. Council's budget process and executive summary preparations were briefly discussed. Concerns were raised about the lack of funding for completing the committee's work on heritage designations. The committee considered the current economic challenges and the possibility of requesting additional funds as a special request next year if needed, despite not utilizing funds from the Township's Council over the past two to three years.

The committee acknowledged the Township's tight fiscal situation and discussed requesting a reduced budget of \$2,000 for their work in 2025, rather than the usual \$4,000. This decision reflects the decreased urgency regarding the delisting of non-designated properties on the municipal heritage register, as recent schedule changes under Bill 200, *Homeowner Protection Act, 2024*, extended the delisting deadline from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2027.

The committee discussed focusing their work efforts on designating either the Township-owned Elmira Carnegie Library or the Maryhill St. Boniface Church and Manse. Committee discussion emphasized the importance of Township financial support for heritage designation work. While constraints on completing committee research were noted, it was acknowledged that the large volume of existing research on St. Boniface Church and Manse could make this designation possible to achieve.

The committee discussed digitizing images and archiving records with the Township or Region, or alternatively creating a cloud storage of research materials for the group. The committee discussed improving their access to research resources and potentially making materials publicly available, similar to the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario digital collection.

The committee reviewed the recent ghost community tour materials and the select materials to be provided for the WMC digital display. The committee discussed the potential for obtaining donations to cover future digital sign board costs.

The committee also discussed potential future photography projects and related funding needs. Beyond the digital signboard display at the WMC, the committee explored other digital media initiatives, including the Breslau Community Centre and Library's "Past and Present" social media page, as well as physical displays at this community centre to promote their work. The Black heritage of Elmira and Breslau was briefly noted as of interest for community display projects. The committee decided to target larger community centres as the primary audience for these efforts.

The committee agreed to split their \$2,000 budget request evenly between education and digital media, and heritage designations, acknowledging associated costs.

The committee discussed the likely lack of objection to the heritage designation of the Maryhill St. Boniface Cemetery and considered the designation of specific items in the church in comparison to the entire St. Boniface Church and Manse. The Township's likely support for the Elmira Carnegie Library was also noted. The committee additionally considered the possibility of future fundraising or requesting additional support funds from Council to complete heritage designations at a later date.

Budget Summary

Education	\$500
Digital Media	\$500
Heritage Designations	\$1000

Total **\$2000**

Staff raised concerns about the low funding request amount, noting it would only partially cover the costs of any heritage designation work. In response, the committee discussed the Township's current economic challenges and their decision to reduce their budget. It was emphasized that additional funding requests to council or fundraising could be pursued in 2025 if needed to meet the committee's heritage designation goals. The committee also weighed the benefits of requesting reduced funding versus receiving no funding at all.

...Carried.

The committee decided to present their Work Plan Report and Presentation to Council on October 22, 2024

Woolwich Heritage Social Media Posts & Newspaper Article

The committee discussed updates to the Township's website, the creation of an EngageWR project page for heritage education, and council's recent decision to adopt Social PinPoint as a local digital engagement platform for 2025. The committee recognized the potential of Social PinPoint to promote heritage education through social media posts in the future.

ACTION: S. Bruce to explore the creation of an EngageWR Heritage community project page for the committee, based on the existing Heritage page on the Township website.

The committee discussed challenges in publishing recent heritage community tours on the Township website and obtaining staff assistance with social media advertising.

The Township's new process for directing communications requests in advance to communications@woolwich.ca was reviewed, along with the committee's volunteer responsibilities as a committee of council.

S. Bruce clarified the Township's communications and accessibility practices and her role as a Committee Support Specialist, offering assistance in liaising with staff when needed to support the committee's work.

The committee discussed barriers to sharing Canadian government news on social media and the potential to link and promote local newspaper articles on a future Heritage EngageWR page, along with highlighting current committee activities. The 100 MB file upload limit for the EngageWR page was noted, along with plans to upload historical photos and update widgets. The EngageWR page was shown to the committee, and the committee of council social media expectations were also discussed.

The committee emphasized the popularity of local heritage social media posts and the importance of maximizing engagement through Social PinPoint. Concerns about privacy in future posts were raised. The committee also highlighted the value of local exposure and recent coverage in the Woolwich Observer.

ACTION: S. Bruce to liaise with Township staff to support website updates and social media posts for the committee.

Reclaimed Materials: Old Winterbourne School House Timbers

This item was not discussed due to the absence of a committee member and was deferred for inclusion in the committee's long-term work plan.

New Business

In response to an email from M. Pinto, Engineer of Transportation Rehabilitation (Design & Construction) at the Region of Waterloo to Planner, Sherwin Meloney, the committee briefly discussed recommendations to engage the Guelph to Goderich Trail Committee regarding the future use of the Bailey Truss and other materials from the West Montrose Bridge rehabilitation.

ACTION: S. Meloney will circulate recent emails from M. Pinto to the committee for further recommendations on the Bailey Truss, bridge materials, and time capsule.

Committee Recruitment Update

An update was provided regarding the recent recruitment process, where one applicant applied. It was noted Tanya Bettridge, Council and Committee Support Specialist, is preparing a report for council discussion on October 22, 2024. If successful, the applicant may join the committee by November 13, 2024. The resignation of another member, frequent absences affecting quorum, and the next potential recruitment period in the spring were also discussed, as well as interest from an additional applicant.

ACTION: S. Bruce will follow up with the Deputy Clerk to discuss recruitment.

Items for the Next Agenda – Nov 13, 2024

The committee scheduled its first meeting of 2025 for January 15th.

The committee discussed the preparation of plaques for 13 designated properties in the Township, along with broader efforts to promote historical interest and heritage education through plaquing. It was decided that the committee will revisit educational plaquing initiatives.

Adjournment (6:37 P.M.)

Moved by K. Boose
Seconded by D. Weltz

That the meeting be adjourned to meet again on Nov 13, 2024.

...Carried.

Recorder: Stacey Bruce, Committee Support Specialist