



MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 17, 2018 MEETING OF THE ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A special meeting of the Arts, Culture, and Heritage Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, January 17, 2018, at 4:30 p.m. at the Sandfield Centre (102 Derby Street West, Alexandria).

PRESENT: **Carma Williams**, Chairperson
Jeff Manley, Councillor
Nicole Nadeau, Member at Large
Karen Davison Wood, Member at Large
Tara Kirkpatrick, Economic Development & Communications Officer/ Recording Secretary

GUEST: **Steven Potter**, CAO
Anne Leduc, Director of Recreation & Community Services

REGRETS: **Dane Lanken**, Member at Large
Nathalie-Anne Bussière, Member at Large

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:41 p.m. by Chairperson Carma Williams.

2. AGENDA ITEMS

a. St. Elmo Congregational Church

A special meeting of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee was called to address a situation involving the St. Elmo Congregational Church. The following agenda items were added on the day of the meeting:

- i. History of the St. Elmo Congregational Church
- ii. Situation as it has progressed
- iii. Options

i. **History of the Church**

- History of the church, as presented by Carma Williams and with reference to the book “The Kirk in Glengarry”, written by Donald M. MacKinnon.
- The St. Elmo Congregational Church was erected in the middle of the Indian Lands.
- When settlements of Loyalists were being planned, a sector in the middle was reserved on the Western edge of Glengarry from the St. Lawrence (21 Concessions). It’s a North-South strip running from the edge of North Glengarry, at the Western extremity of Glengarry.
- It was originally intended for Sir John Johnson. When he declined to accept the property, it was held to settle the claims of the Indians to some of the lands.

- It became known as the lands of Glengarry. Some lease-holds were given to Scots. Many of them originally squatters.
- All of the early churches were known as the “Indian Land Churches.” These properties include Maxville, Dominionville and St. Elmo, among others.
- The Beech Churches were near 17th Concession, south of Maxville at around 1826. They served all Protestants.
- Presbyterian – mainly Scottish, contributed money to create the Beech Church and a second, frame church. When the securing of a deed came about for the frame church, there was dissension over the name of the church, causing a split. This led to the creation of the Congregational Church in St. Elmo.
- By the early 1830s there were plans for a place of worship. After two years of bad crops, times were scarce. The congregation chose to build a modest church (The St. Elmo Congregational Church). Nails, putty and glass were given by the Church in Montreal.
- John Fisher donated the land on which St. Elmo Congregational Church was built. Materials were gathered over years and in late summer through early Autumn of 1837, the church was erected.
- Rough seats were built later on.
- Hardwood flooring covers the original planks
- In September 1894, a reporter from the Montreal Daily Witness came to Glengarry for the 100th anniversary of Lochiel. This reporter visited the St. Elmo Congregational Church and reported that the pews were straight and narrow and so close together that a man with small legs must sit sideways. He remarked on the history of this church.
- Around 1912: Congregational services came to an end.
- In 1920, this historic place of worship was acquired by the Gordon Presbyterian Church
- Periodic renovations were made to the building. In 1864, the Gordon Church (Red brick located nearby) was erected.
- St. Elmo is the oldest Congregational Church still in existence.

ii. Situation as it has progressed

- In 2017, there were three Presbyterian Churches serving the area near Maxville. These included the Presbyterian Churches in Maxville, Moose Creek and St. Elmo. Due to diminishing attendance, the congregation determined that it could no longer maintain all three church properties. They disbanded the congregation in St. Elmo and gave the church properties back to the National Church, which is looking to dispose of the property as soon as possible.
- In the summer of 2017, some members of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee were advised that the Presbyterian Church in Canada was considering the sale of the property. Since that time, the property has been put on the market. Individuals have expressed interest and inquiries have been made to the Municipality’s Building Department regarding the demolition the log building on that property.
- Since the properties were put up for sale, the Iroquois of St. Regis in Cornwall have notified the Presbyterian National Church that they are seeking clarification on whether they have treaty rights to the two pieces that are up for sale.

iii. Options

The ACHC Committee members proposed that there are three options for responding to this situation:

1- Recommend to Council that this property be listed and possibly designated on the Municipal Register. This would involve verifying the legal steps and procedures.

2- Immediately speak with the National Presbyterian Church to determine if we can act to dismantle the building and remove it from the premises.

3 – Leave it until there is a new owner and work to see if there are options after the property is sold.

- About 10+ years ago the Glengarry Pioneer Museum (GPM) Board expressed interest in acquiring the Church, but the trustees of the Congregational Church were not interested. More recently, a Baptist church in Roxborough was offered to the Museum. However, it was decided that there should be a moratorium on new buildings until such a time as the Museum was in a more positive financial position.
- When the Glengarry Pioneer Museum looked into acquiring the Roxborough Church, it was estimated that it would cost about \$30,000 to relocate the building. In that case, the church would have been lifted up off of its foundation and moved in one piece. In this case the log building would likely need to be dismantled log-by-log to be moved.
- The Glengarry Pioneer Museum Board is meeting later tonight. Members of the ACHC committee will attend the meeting to see if the Glengarry Pioneer Museum has any interest in acquiring the St. Elmo Congregational Church building. The ACHC committee members determined that if both Council and the Glengarry Pioneer Museum are interested, then we can work with the various groups to better develop an action plan.

Motion:

Concerns regarding the possible demolition of the building led the Committee, at its meeting on January 17, 2017, to approve the following resolution: “THAT the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee recommends to Council that the property located at 18191 Kenyon Concession 19 in St. Elmo housing the log Congregational Church is of significant heritage interest and that it be included on the Municipal Register, with possible intent to designate it as a property of cultural heritage value and/or interest at a later date”.

**Passed by: Jeff Manley
Carried.**

Seconded by: Karen Davison Wood

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Arts Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at 5:45 p.m. at the Sandfield Centre.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Moved by: Nicole Nadeau

Carried.

Recording Secretary – Tara Kirkpatrick

Chair – Carma Williams