



Elgin County Museum Advisory Committee Meeting

October 6th, 2021

Elgin Heritage Centre

Present: Sally Martyn, Kim Teuscher, Charlie Jenkins, Amanda VandenWyngaert, Donna Lord

Regrets: Vice-chair- Perry Clutterbuck, Joan Mansell (Secretary),

Staff in Attendance: Brian Masschaele, Mike Baker, Ally Shelly (recording secretary)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 a.m. by Sally Martyn, acting chair.

2. Confirmation of Members Terms

Brian Masschaele reported on committee members.

2021 Elgin County Museum Advisory Committee Members

- Amanda VandenWyngaert, (4th Year of First 4-year term)- Museum liaison member
- Joan Mansell, Secretary (4th Year of Fourth 4-year term, 6th year as Secretary)
- WI member (east)
- Donna Lord (1st Year of First 4-Year term) – WI member (west)
- Kim Teuscher (4th Year of First 4-year term) – Member-at-large
- Charlie Jenkins (2nd Year of Second 4-Year term) – Agricultural representative
- Councillor Sally Martyn – County Council representative

2021 Resignations:

- Helen VanBrenk, Chair (1st Year of Fourth 4-year term, 6th year as Chair) – WI member
- Perry Clutterbuck, Vice-Chair (4th Year of Fourth 4-year term, 8th year as Vice-Chair) – Member at-large

General discussion took place on how best to replace these vacancies. There was consensus to increase representation for County museums by one member (making two such representatives) and to decrease at-large representation from two members to one.

Brian will seek to recommend to County Council revisions to the Museum's governing by-law reflecting the above and fill member vacancies before the end of 2021 or at the beginning of 2022, for new members to be confirmed in the first meeting of 2022.

3. Election of Officers

In 2022 the Museum Advisory Committee will require elections of new officers. Nomination and confirmation of a Chair and Vice Chair, and confirmation of Joan's continued role as secretary will be required.

4. Additions to the Agenda

Replacement Plaques and Dr. Crane Monument.

See New Business

5. Approval Minutes from November 4th, 2020.

Moved by Kim Teuscher, and seconded by Charlie Jenkins that the minutes from the November 4th, 2020 meeting be approved. Carried.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

None

7. Correspondence

A letter from the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries was received regarding the approval of the museum's Community Museum Operating Grant application. The grant was processed on September 23, 2021.

8. Curator's Report

Mike Baker updated members on museum projects.

The current exhibit My Story, My Tattoo from the Wellington County Museum and Archives is getting good reception, the best for 2021, as the Heritage Centre has been closed for much of the other exhibits; Unmasking Influenza (January 9 to April 9) and The Ones We Met- Inuit Traditional Knowledge and the Franklin Expedition (May 1 to August 9).

There is a positive visitor response for My Story, My Tattoo and a response on-line. Connection was made with tattoo parlour in St. Thomas, Stay True, Tattoo to loan tattoo related artifacts to

complement the exhibit.

Charlie Jenkin's shared the article written by Eric Bunnell for the St. Thomas Times Journal on the exhibit which he discovered published in Ontario Farmer.

a) On This Spot

When the cycling murals were proposed we took a look at what was available from tourism for cycling guides and found a version of a printed guide Paul Baldwin wrote about 20 years ago.

The plan was to update this guide, but just at that time the Aylmer museum announced they had hired a tech firm to produce an online guide for their historic sites. The company On This Spot has created virtual walking tours for a number of towns and cities mostly in the west. They work mainly with tourism authorities.

Knowing the High Wheel Way, the new cycling route on Imperial Road, was opening this year, it was decided to create a virtual tour for people to learn about the historic sites in Malahide Township.

After connecting with the company, about 40 locations in Elgin County were chosen as a way to tie the cycling murals together.

The On this Spot team went through the database and selected a series of historic images and then swept through the area photographing matching present-day photos of the locations to create then and now features. Text with the photos tells the user about the significance of each location.

There are about 40 locations ready to be posted. Three were selected to be part of a Culture Days promotion. Go to <https://onthisspot.ca/cities/elgincounty> for the three locations Belmont, Sparta and Port Bruce where users can use the fade feature to see then and now photos and insert themselves into the historic image using the site's technology.

For Culture Days, participants will have a chance to pick up a historical print at the Elgin County Heritage Centre when they use the On This Spot app.

Mike circulated a proposed 2022/2023 exhibit schedule.

b) 2022 Exhibit Schedule

Two shows booked from Ingenium:

Space to Spoon, January 8 to April 3

Cipher/Decipher, September 16 to January 8

Both are interactive and will offer plenty opportunity for programming such as our annual Family Day event, if we are able to host activities.

Summer exhibit planning on the 125th anniversary of the Baker Picnic will exhibit their collection and illustrate family history. An additional exhibit on the picnic tradition will

complement the Baker Family section. At one time unions, clubs, fraternal organizations, schools, churches all held an annual picnic. These events with the ancillary trains, boats, and bands constituted major social occasions. Organizations such as the Irish Benevolent Society and the Commercial Travelers' (salesman) hosted immense picnics in Port Stanley. All of our ports experienced picnics.

The museum has ribbons and some picnic-related artifacts, costuming and the archives has many photos.

2023 Exhibit Schedule

in 2023 the museum will focus on displaying the permanent collection and local history.

January to April

150th of the Completion of the Canada Southern Railway

Spring - Summer

100th anniversary of the Union golf course and the St. Thomas Golf and Country Club. This is opportunity to potentially acquire some of the Pullen collection of clubs, etc.

Set of panels made for the exhibit could be produced for the use of the club after in permanent locations in the clubhouse.

Fall

Cycling, was originally an invitation to collaborate with Museum London, now on hold. The museum could proceed alone. The main component would be selections from Rick Wolf's collection. We could produce a new cycling guide along with the show – historical highlights and a map to supplement the On This Spot routes.

9. Bushell Estate Planning

Mike provided an overview of the gift's components and work completed to date.

a) Augmented Reality App

Mike Bakers introduced Fiona Murray, Augmented Reality Research Associate to report on the augmented reality project.

With Exar Studios, Engage Art app users essentially participate in a digital scavenger hunt, visiting locations to use the cameras on their smart phones to experience history and activities through a new visual reality.

The first of three augmented reality adventures in partnership with Exar Studios was launched June 2021 with 5 attractions in St. Thomas. Port Stanley attractions are currently in

development with six attractions being created. Fiona shared images of the St. Thomas attraction in use and concept designs for the Port Stanley attractions.

Port Stanley Attractions

1. Stork Club – animated storks made to look like famous musicians that played there. Users click on each stork for date of appearance and biographical information. Music clips for each artist.

2. The Mineral State rescue. Inspired by the mural on the former Jackson's fish house. A table top experience – animated scene of the grounding and breakup of the Mineral State in the storm followed by the arrival of the lifesaving crew and the rescue.

Audio of the description of the rescue from the captain and crew printed in the London Advertiser. Using three voices: the captain, the first mate and one of the lifesaving crew.

3. The Incline cars – no plan yet. focus on contractor Major Ellison, everything else he built, from his perspective, his challenges, etc.

4. The L&PS -no plan yet - electrification angle, could be from Adam Beck's perspective, demise because of the car.

5. Fish - a landscape of animated fish – think Finding Nemo -click on individual fish for info on the species in a fish character voice.

6. Ships – a series of animated ships are brought into the harbor and the image is tapped by users to “help unload the cargo” e.g. San Sebastiono with Spanish olives for Club House in London.

Through this project Fiona has been able to complete research for a series of articles in Elgin Life and assist with research on other project like the new cycling tours, and the On This Spot project.

Exar Studios - <https://engage.art/st-thomas>

b) Restoration of Major Works of Art

Funds had been allotted for the restoration of 5 paintings from the Museum's permanent collection. The newly restored and reframed painting of R.H. Whale's Spohn's Flats c. 1891 was presented to the committee with a before photo for comparison. The painting was also reframed with new backing; as the original frame was made from crown molding.

This painting is a candidate for reproduction for an image to be mounted at the Elevated Park.

c) Cycling Trails Signs and Murals

Project to create artwork and signs along the network of cycling trails in Elgin County

All call for artist to complete six murals across Elgin County went out in the summer of 2021. Murals are now underway for 4 of the 6 selected sites. Three artists have been accepted for four sites. Each artist was offered a second mural location.

Murals will be painted on metal panels, for easy removal and treated with anti-graffiti protection.

Murals at the Shedden picnic shelter at the fairgrounds and the Port Bruce park washroom will be painted by Candy McManiman from Union.

The Belmont Library mural will be completed by Melissa Kempf of St. Thomas and the Port Burwell library by Laura Peturson, Callander.

d) Outdoor Learning Environment

In spring 2022 plans will be started on the outdoor learning space for educational programming near the Heritage Centre. A suggestion was made to view the outdoor classroom at South Dorchester Public School as an example.

e) Archives Digitization Assistant Position

A year long, full-time position to complete digitization projects in the archives.

The Stollery Collection; a collection of approximately 10,000 photographs from the St. Thomas Times Journal dating approximately 1946 to 1952, purchased from Maxwell's Photos has been completed.

Digitization of newspapers has started.

10. Year-to-date Statistics

Ally Shelly shares the Heritage Centre giftshop and attendance statistics for 2021

Giftshop Report

Last three years are provided for a comparison to what was normal before the pandemic.

2019 – Revenue (\$4288) Expenses \$2287 with total revenue being higher than costs by \$2001

2020 – Revenue (\$1027.15) Expenses \$176 with total revenue being higher than costs by \$851

2021- Revenue (\$755) Expenses \$944 with total costs being higher than revenue by \$189 –
January to September 30

We have taken this year to restock new books for the store, Frank Prothero and Field Naturalist Guide books.

2020 Donations - \$340.05

2021 Donations - Total donations from January 5 to September 30, 2021 are \$312.39.

Attendance Report

The Heritage Centre was closed to the public from January 5 to March 9, 2021

and April 6 to July 20, 2021 due to the Covid- 19 provincial lockdowns.

We did still operate as a curbside pick-up/drop off for some donations, giftshop sales and other business.

From January 5 to September 30, 2021 we had a total of 296 visitors.

In September we did very well. This was our busiest month with 85 visitors and \$129.20 in donations.

11. Storage / Facility Planning

Brian Masschaele reported on planning for improvements to the museum's collection storage. A number of very large collections have been acquired over the last few years, maxing out storage capabilities, this is an incentive to start a strategic plan for the future of the collection. Next year a collection review start, artifacts will be reviewed to ensure that they meet the collection mandate and have adequate documentation.

Storage will be consolidated to make better use of our facilities. Elgin Manor holds large furnishings and has had limited access during the pandemic, the museum was unable to retrieve or return artifacts. The renovations in the Elgin County Administration building next year will affect the Archives and Museum storage and will provide an opportunity to consider renovating onsite storage.

Hiring contract position for a collection assistant is being considered for this project.

12. Museum Partner Reports

Amanda VandenWyngaert was unable to attend the meeting, but provided an Elgin County Museums Update, including partner events for the Aylmer-Malahide Museum and Archives; Backus Page House Museum, Edison Museum/Collection, Elgin County Railway Museum, Gay Lea Museum and Port Burwell Marine Museum.

See Attached

Sally Martyn reports on the Sparta Forge and Anvil Museum and The Sparta Church and Cultural Centre.

They were able to open both sites in July and will remain open until October 10th.

The Forge had one full time summer student for the season and the Church museum was operated by volunteers. Elgin County Museum student Lauren Donker, assisted with two days. The exhibit Pioneer Know How, a display on early settler tools and customs has been a success. A herb garden and a natural dye garden were planted at the Church museum for this exhibit, a local artist uses plants to create natural dyes in a traditional way, samples of these dyed materials are on display inside.

The major fundraising events, the High Tea and Fashion Show and the Feast at the Forge dinner were not held this year or last, this has been unfortunate for the museums fundraising, but they are fortunate to have dedicated donations and devoted volunteers.

13. Committee Member Reports

Donna Lord shared Joan Mansell's Elgin District report.

The Elgin District Women's Institute presented a \$500.00 4-H scholarship to McKellar (Mac) Watson in August at the home of Assistant Scholarship Chairperson, Luella Monteith (Mac's aunt). Also attending were Mary Clutterbuck, Elgin District President and Scholarship Chairperson and Joan Mansell, Elgin District Secretary.

Southern Area hosted an open air gathering at Belmont Park in August with sit-down quiz games and about 30 members attended. Covid-friendly cookies were provided.

Some Elgin WI branches have met virtually and physically recently. Even through Covid, branches have made financial donations to the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital Foundation, Caring Cupboard, Grace Café, Fingal Heritage Park to name a few.

The Southern Area Women's Institute will be hosting their convention virtually and by Zoom October 23rd at 10:00 a.m. The SA executive is voted in annually and each district gives a brief report of its branches.

It is still very quiet for any active events due to Covid restrictions.

Donna also reports that the WI's were given a tour of the Fingal Heritage Park by Len Leitch, which was a very informative tour.

14. New Business

a) Replacement Plaques

Sally Martyn mentioned the missing Talbot cairn and 1812 historical plaques. The plaques were stolen a few years ago and have not been replaced.

Historic Sites Canada was approached to provide replacements, but have yet deliver them.

It is suggested that we request to have a local company create new ones or consider contacting MP Karen Vecchio's office to assist with encouraging Historic Sites Canada to provide the replacements.

b) Dr. Crane Monument

Brian reported that he has been directed by council to inquire with the owner of the plaque from the former Crane Conservation Area about its possible transfer to the museum.

13. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held February 2, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. at the Heritage Centre.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Motion to adjourn, moved by Charlie Jenkins. Carried.

Elgin County Museums Update
October 6, 2021

Aylmer-Malahide Museum & Archives

- Open by appointment only with Covid-19 protocols in place
 - Exhibit looks at popular types of glass including carnival glass, uranium glass, depression glass, mercury glass, and milk glass. There is an interactive touch-free uranium glass display that allows visitors to change the display from regular light to blacklight using voice control
- ‘On This Spot App’
 - The then-and-now portion of the app has launched, the text for the full tours is still being written
 - It will also be available in Low German so that it’s accessible to the Low German-speaking community as well
 - We’ve established an iPad lending program so that people without a smart device/data can participate as well
- We were able to extend our YCW contract and will have a student with us part-time until March

Backus Page House Museum

- They are open until October 10th
 - Friday – Sunday 11 am – 4 pm
- They hosted Life in the Talbot Settlement from September 25th – 26th

Edison Museum/Collection

- The Edison, Vienna & Area Museum (Operated by the Bayham Historical Society) has moved into their new building at 6209 Plank Road, Vienna

Elgin County Railway Museum

- Closed to the public August 29th for the season
- They hosted an artisan market on October 2nd

Gay Lea Museum

- They have been closed since the start of Covid-19
- Michelle Christmann has left and Kerr Smith has taken her place
- They are currently waiting for permission from head office to reopen. They were unable to open in 2021. Currently they do not have a museum coordinator and their new museum coordinator starts in January.

Port Burwell Marine Museum & Lighthouse

- They closed on September 6th for the season
- They had 3 students during the summer
- Their exhibit about the beaches was well attended