

Written Delegation by Alissa Denham-Robinson (Chair, Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee)  
 Re: Statutory Meetings During the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency (PED20108(a)) (City Wide)  
 Date: June 19, 2020

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Attn: Fred Eisenberger, Mayor of the City of Hamilton and  
 Members of Hamilton City Council

**Re: Statutory Meetings During the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency (PED20108(a))  
 (City Wide)**

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I wish to express my personal thanks to the members of Hamilton City Council for their review, discussion and support of municipal heritage matters during this time of COVID-19; including four (4) recent heritage related items:

1. A motion (dated April 22, 2020) for the designation of Evergreen Farm located at 1389 Progreston Road, Carlisle, a Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest;
2. A motion (dated April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020) aimed at protecting Hamilton's built heritage by adding 40 properties within Ancaster's historic core, to the City of Hamilton Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (non-designated properties);
3. A motion (dated May 20, 2020) enacting an interim Control By-law to restrict lands in the Waterdown Community Node area; pending the completion of planning studies including the Waterdown Village Built Heritage Inventory; and
4. A motion (dated May 20, 2020) directing staff to prepare a report detailing the necessary revisions to any City of Hamilton By-laws to allow virtual Committee Meetings during the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency. Amongst the committees included under this motion, were the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee (HMHC) including Working Groups, Cross-Melville Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee and Heritage Permit Review Sub-Committee meetings.

Since the closure of city run facilities due to Covid-19 and the declaration of a Provincial State of Emergency, the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee has not met since February 20, 2020.

Due to the City's established procedural by-laws, Volunteer Citizen Advisor Committees are unable to meet in a virtual format. However, the Ontario Heritage Act requires Municipal Councils to consult with their Heritage Committee.

In response to Council's direction of May 20, 2020, staff have prepared the required report outlining the necessary revisions to the procedural by-laws to accommodate virtual meetings.

**With this information, Council now has the opportunity to change the established procedural bylaws during the current COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency, to enable the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee and its related heritage Subcommittees and Working Groups to resume a meeting schedule (in a virtual format) until such time that committee members may meet again safely and in person.**

**I would ask Council members to please consider approval of staff's recommendations (June 16, 2020) which will allow our volunteers to continue working during this unprecedented time and within the HMHC mandate; to advise Council on matters under the Ontario Heritage Act.**

Why is it important to resume a meeting schedule as soon as possible?

Having the ability to meet, offers Council access to the advice of HMHC on all matters relating to the designation of property, the review of heritage permit applications and other cultural heritage conservation measures under Parts IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

One more specific reason relates to Ancaster's historic core. Despite Council's motion of April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the 40 heritage properties recommended for addition to the Municipal Register and therefore afforded 60 days protection from demolition remain unprotected at this time. They will remain vulnerable until HMHC can formally meet in consultation and as required under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Should an application to demolish be received by staff before HMHC can meet, then staff will be forced to act quickly to assess the subject property(s) and Council will need to make a rapid decision to either approve demolition or pass a motion for emergency designation. Reactive decisions like this, often result in divisiveness within the community and between all parties involved. Not only does this become a drain on staff resources, but also typically leads to a negative outcome for the heritage property. This is never the desired outcome.

Again, I would ask you to consider staff's recommendation to allow the necessary revisions to municipal procedural by-laws to accommodate virtual meetings for the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee and its related heritage Subcommittees and Working Groups.

Our committee members are eager to resume their role as volunteer advisors; in service to Council and the City of Hamilton.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerest regards,



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Alissa Denham-Robinson, Chair  
Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee