



TOURISM
**WINDSOR
ESSEX**
PELEE ISLAND

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October 30, 2019

Mayor Larry Snively
Town of Essex Council
33 Talbot Street South
Essex, Ontario N8M 1A8

Your Worship and Town of Essex Council,

Re: Financial Support for the John R. Park Homestead's Heritage Centre

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI) is pleased to support the Essex Region Conservation Authority's (ERCA) development of a Heritage Centre at John R. Park Homestead. The Centre will create a connected, streamlined year-round visitor experience, and serve as a welcome and gathering space.

Through this ambitious undertaking, funds are being raised to build a modern, environmentally friendly Centre with educational and exhibit space, accessible and adequate washroom facilities, and a significantly enhanced visitor and student facility. This new cultural space will improve the overall education experience, create a tourism gateway between the City of Windsor and County of Essex, and important resting/washroom facilities to complement the region's growing cycling infrastructure.

One of the objectives that will be achieved, if successful in fundraising, is to create a Welcome Space/Tourism Hub, thereby streamlining and significantly improving the visitor experience. The Homestead's gift shop will be expanded, providing visitors with the opportunity to shop for handmade goods by local crafters and artisans, such as those showcased as part of TWEPI's 'WE Made It' program.

As the Destination Marketing Organization for Windsor Essex, TWEPI's mission is to bolster the image and economy of the region by developing, marketing and promoting our destination in cooperation within a united tourism industry. Supporting a tourism hub such as this is paramount, as it is crucial in creating a "sense of place". This is attributed in part to festivals, events, cultural attractions, the region's rich history and heritage, its stories, people, geographical landscape, and cuisine. Visitors can only truly appreciate this full cultural experience through cross-pollination with various other tourist sectors, which thereby churn and sustain further revenue growth within the region, and in turn, support the tourism industry. Through this initiative, John R. Park Homestead will focus on developing many aspects pertaining to experiential tourism and the indelible mark it leaves on visitors and the local economy.

TWEPI is looking forward to partnering with ERCA on this tourism hub, which will also showcase the County Road 50 experience. Staff would be trained as Tourism Ambassadors to highlight the many experiences that W.E. have to offer. Furthermore, visitation data would be readily captured and used cohesively with TWEPI's own visitor statistics. The hours of operation could be enhanced during the high tourism season and the Centre would remain open in the shoulder season to allow for additional access to visitor information.

We are very excited about this project and ask that you give the utmost consideration in financially supporting this highly beneficial opportunity for the Town of Essex and our region as a whole.

Sincerely,

Gordon Orr
Chief Executive Officer



October 31, 2019

Re: Our support for a new visitor welcome centre and tourism hub at the J. R. Park Homestead

To whom it may concern,

Explore the Shore started as a group of businesses that formed a strategic alliance in 2010, to expand County Road 50 as a tourism destination. Our community partnership has proven to be a success and we have experienced a huge increase in tourism along County Road 50. We are pleased that surrounding businesses in neighbouring towns have also benefited. The J. R. Park Homestead is both a founding member and an active participant in our activities. We consider them a very important asset in the area, as their location borders the east end of Essex, welcoming traffic from the nearby towns of Kingsville and Leamington as well as larger cities east of us. We know that our visitors enjoy the wide range of attractions along the lake, and our data shows that more people from a wider area are discovering this region, and are returning with their friends and families.

Our members are very excited about the new Visitors Heritage Centre, and applaud ERCA and their staff for proposing to create a much needed facility that will both attract more visitors and enhance their experience in our area. Visitors and locals enjoy the J. R. Park Homestead, the museum, the interpretive activities, as well as the natural landscape including the lake and creek access. We know, from our business operations, and speaking with hundreds of visitors a day, that people look for accessible washrooms at all times of the day, and seek information on destinations. As well, cycle tourists have discovered County Road 50, and with the completion of the east link of the bike paths, we expect this sector to expand. These cyclists will enjoy a safe place to stop, rest, and refresh at these new facilities. Locating a new tourism hub where tourists actually pass by on bicycle, automobile or walking is crucial for the growing number of visitors who travel along County Road 50.

We support expanding the new visitor centre to become our tourism hub on County Road 50, and encourage the Town of Essex to financially support this project.

Sincerely,

Leslie Balsillie, Chair, Explore the Shore 2019 www.exploretheshore.ca



November 1, 2019

Re: Support for new visitor centre at JR Park Homestead,

To whom it may concern,

Farm Dog Cycles is an established business on County Rd 50 offering bicycle rentals and guided tours since 2012. Recently, we have expanded our rental offerings to make this service available in Kingsville, Point Pelee National Park and Colchester Harbour Park.

The John R Park Homestead sits at an important site joining Essex and Kingsville along the busy wine route and the adjoining bike lanes. It is an important site in a stretch of land without accessible natural parkland and public amenities.

We support expanding the new visitor centre to become our tourism hub on County Road 50, and encourage the Town of Essex to financially support this project.

Sincerely,

Megan Balsillie
Farm Dog Cycles

The Fruit Wagon



Harrow, Ontario

Doug & Leslie Balsillie
793E County Road 50
R.R. 1
Harrow, Ontario N0R 1G0
Phone (519) 738-4819
leslie@thefruitwagon.com

October 31, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Our Support for the New Visitor Center at the J. R. Park Homestead

We have grown fruits & vegetables on our County Road 50 farm west of the J.R. Park Homestead since 1983, and have been marketing produce at our roadside wagon to many visitors and neighbours who travel this route. Our business benefits from all the visitors attracted to the Homestead and their many events, and we appreciate the support that we receive from the staff. We are pleased to have a mutual working relationship to support their events with our farm produce.

The expansion of County Road 50 as a tourist destination in the last decade has been incredible, and the J. R. Park Homestead has been a central part in this expansion. We know this, because we talk with many of our customers about where they are from, how they learned about this area, what they enjoy about their visit, and if they plan on returning. We've learned that more people are visiting both from our local area, and from a wider region across the province and into the United States. Many are amazed at our "hidden treasure", enjoy discovering new places and plan on returning.

We have been proud of the developments that ERCA has accomplished at the J. R. Park Homestead Conservation Area, and are very excited about the new visitor center. ERCA staff have been very creative and thoughtful in creating a much needed facility. We are quite pleased that outdoor washrooms will be included as many of our customers ask about facilities. We encourage The Town of Essex to support this project in creating a tourism hub for our region.

Sincerely,

Doug & Leslie Balsillie

D & L Balsillie, 793 County Road 50 East, R.R.1, Harrow, ON N0R 1G0
519-738-4819 leslie@thefruitwagon.com
www.thefruitwagon.com

Local. fresh. healthy. sustainable. from our family to yours

Thank you for sharing the great news about JRPH with our Explore the Shore group, Richard, Kris and Danielle. This is exactly the kind of community development we were hoping for when we started our strategic alliance in 2010 (we think of it as “layering” the Road with interesting things that “call” to people). The goals *then* were to “re-introduce” County Road 50 to Windsor Essex and Kent County and create a vibrant business community that would bring visitors and tourists back year-round.

John R. Park and Holiday Beach have been with us from the beginning, offering unique experiences, and working with us to build the multifaceted cultural and business community that is *now* County Road 50 ... a destination for tourists, cyclists, diners, wine drinkers, explorers, and bridal parties. We’re still working on the year-round part, something the new Heritage Centre will help.

We’ll be cheering you on as you raise funds and make plans for your new space.

All the best to you,

Ann, Murray, Steve and the Oxley team

(Oxley Estate Winery – received via email)