



## Report to Council

Department: Corporate Services  
Division: Finance and Business Services  
Date: November 3, 2025  
Prepared by: Ann Marie Unis, Manager, Financial Services  
Report Number: Finance and Business Services-2025-06  
Subject: Heritage Groups  
Number of Pages: 6

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That** Finance and Business Services Report 2025-06, entitled Heritage Groups prepared by Ann Marie Unis, dated November 3, 2025, be received.

### **Purpose**

In response to Mayor Bondy's Notice of Motion dated May 20, 2025 (Resolution R25-06-270), Council directed Administration to provide a report, prior to the 2026 budget deliberations, on the levels of service provided by all heritage groups that lease space within Town-owned facilities. This report includes information related to each group's governance structure, revenues and expenses, and facility usage.

## **Background and Discussion**

The Town of Essex is home to several heritage organizations committed to preserving local history, artifacts, and stories. These groups operate out of various municipally-owned buildings and play a key role in promoting community awareness and cultural preservation.

## **Overview of Heritage Groups and Mandates**

Each heritage group is governed by a board of directors and generally offers memberships to the public. Their core missions align with the Town's cultural goals: preserving Essex's rich historical legacy and enhancing public access to historical education and resources.

- **Heritage Colchester** promotes public awareness of Colchester's early history and its significance in Ontario's development.
- **Heritage Essex** focuses on preserving heritage sites and artifacts across the Town.
- **Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society (HEIRS)** aims to preserve local and family histories and protect historical buildings and artifacts.
- **Essex and Community Historical Research Society (ECHRS)** is dedicated to preserving and providing public access to historical records and artifacts from Essex County.
- **Essex County Steam and Gas Engine Museum Inc.** educates the public about 19th- and early 20th-century gas and steam engines and antique tractors through a public museum.

## **Membership and Governance**

All organizations operate with independent boards of directors and offer annual memberships. Please refer to Appendix A for specific details for each organization regarding membership levels and associated fees.

## **Financial Overview**

Appendix A summarizes each group's financial position, based on 2024 actuals and 2025 budgeted revenues and expenses. All values include lease-related expenses and any grant funding provided by the Town.

## **Lease Agreements and Town Support**

The Essex County Steam and Gas Engine Museum owns the building it operates out of and leases the respective land from the Town. Aside from this agreement, all other heritage groups lease their spaces under By-Law-authorized agreements. Some also receive community grant funding either through direct By-Law or through the Community Partnership Grant Program.

The table below illustrates the value of the leases and grants received in 2025. Also included are the average annual direct expenditures paid by the Town and not charged back to the Heritage groups. The Town covers facility maintenance and repairs, services and/or shared utilities.

<b>Heritage Group</b>	<b>2025 Annual Lease</b>	<b>By-Law</b>	<b>Funding from Town Grants</b>	<b>Expenses paid by Town (Budget)</b>
<b>Heritage Colchester</b>	\$5.00	By-Law 2041 (for facility lease)	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
<b>Heritage Essex</b>	\$0.00	By-Law 2321 (for funding)	\$25,000.00	\$5,275.00
<b>Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society (HEIRS)</b>	\$1,415.16	By-Law 1790 (for facility lease)	\$2,375.00	\$250.00
<b>Essex and Community Historical Research Society (ECHRS)</b>	\$5.00	By-Law 857 (for facility lease)	\$0.00	\$2,275.00
<b>Essex County Steam and Gas Engine Museum Inc</b>	\$1.00	By-Law 904 (for land lease)	\$0.00	\$0.00

## **Summary of Financial and Operational Data**

- Heritage Essex is the largest operation in terms of both revenue and expenses, receiving the highest grant (\$25,000) and operating rent-free under a dedicated By-Law.
- HEIRS has the highest membership base (111 members) and has been a past recipient of funding through the Community Partnership Fund.
- Heritage Colchester and ECHRS operate at a modest scale, each paying symbolic lease fees and receiving no direct grants.
- The Essex County Steam and Gas Engine Museum did not provide financials for 2024 or 2025. The organization leases land within Co-An Park at a nominal rate.
- All facilities that are owned by the Town are maintained by the Town at no cost to the organizations.

## **Financial Impact**

This report is for information purposes only. All lease and grant-related transactions are already reflected in the 2025 approved operating budget.

## **Consultations**

Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services

Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services

Kate Rowe, Director, Corporate Services/Treasurer

Kate Giurissevich, Chief Administrative Officer

Heritage Colchester

Heritage Essex

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society (HEIRS)

Essex and Community Historical Research Society (ECHRS)

Essex County Steam and Gas Engine Museum Inc

## **Attachments**

Appendix A – Financial Data Provided by Heritage Groups

## **Link to Strategic Priorities**

- Embrace asset management best practices to build, maintain, and continuously improve our municipally owned infrastructure.
- Leverage our Town’s competitive advantages to promote jobs and economic investment.
- Take care of our natural environment and strengthen the sense of belonging to everyone who makes Essex “home”.
- Deliver friendly customer service in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.
- Build corporate-level and community-level climate resilience through community engagement and partnership and corporate objectives.

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	Heritage Groups - Finance and Business Services-2025-06.docx
Attachments:	- Appendix A - Heritage Groups.docx
Final Approval Date:	Oct 27, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



**Kate Giurissevich, Chief Administrative Officer - Oct 27, 2025 - 4:12 PM**