



The Corporation of the Town of Essex

Essex Municipal Heritage Committee Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2026, 5:00 pm

Location: Essex Municipal Building, 33 Talbot Street South

Present: Chair - Basden, Perry
Member - Aldridge, Marnie
Member - Baldwin, Jacqueline
Member - Kokovai, Richard
Member - Kowtiuk, Laurie
Member - Meloche, Bernard
Member - Stephenson, Lorrie

Absent: Chair - Clarkson, Connie
Vice Chair - Matyi, Linda
Councillor - Hammond, Rodney, Ward 4
Councillor - Matyi, Jason, Ward 3, Vice Chair

Also Present: Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services
Rita Jabbour, Manager, Planning Services
Marsha Buchta, Recording Secretary

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request. Please contact the Clerk's Office at clerks@essex.ca or 519-776-7336 extension 1100 or 1101.

1. Call to Order

The Recording Secretary called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A call for Nominations for the position of Chair for the meeting of January 29, 2026, was requested due to the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair. Laurie Kowtiuk nominated Perry Basden for the position of Chair for the meeting, Perry accepted the nomination.

EMHC26-01-63

Moved By Laurie Kowtiuk

Seconded By Marnie Aldridge

That Perry Basden be elected to the position of Chair for the January 29, 2026, Essex Municipal Heritage Committee Meeting.

Carried

2. Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that this land is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations (comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi Peoples), and of the Huron-Wendat Peoples. We value the significant historical and contemporary

contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original Peoples of Turtle Island who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.

3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest noted at this time.

4. Adoption of Published Agenda

4.1 Essex Municipal Heritage Committee Meeting Agenda for January 29, 2026

EMHC26-01-64

Moved By Richard Kokovai

Seconded By Laurie Kowtiuk

That the published agenda for the January 29, 2026 Essex Municipal Heritage Committee Meeting be adopted as presented.

Carried

5. Adoption of Minutes

5.1 Essex Municipal Heritage Committee Minutes for November 27, 2025

EMHC26-01-65

Moved By Bernard Meloche

Seconded By Jacqueline Baldwin

That the minutes of the Essex Municipal Heritage Committee meeting held November 27, 2025 be adopted as circulated.

Carried

6. Delegations

6.1 St. Clement Church - Heritage Alteration Permit

Derek Thachuk - St. Clement Church and Bob Chomycz - Telecom Engineering

A Heritage Alteration request was submitted for St. Clement's Church in McGregor, which is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. Rita Jabbour, Manager of Planning provided an overview. The proposal aims to install an antenna system in the church's bell tower to provide high-speed, low-cost internet service to the nearby trailer park and potentially Masaccio Drive. Two antennas would be mounted inside the bell tower; visual simulation was presented. St. Clement's property committee and parish leadership will be consulted for approval upon decision of Heritage Committee. Member Bernie Meloche questioned whether the Delegates had approached the new apartment building to place the antennas on that building? Despite numerous attempts and messages left with the Developer, no response was received.

EMHC26-01-66

Moved By Marnie Aldridge

Seconded By Richard Kokovai

That the Delegations be received.

Carried

EMHC26-01-67

Moved By Richard Kokovai
Seconded By Laurie Kowtiuk

That the Heritage Alteration Permit allowing the installation of 2 antennas, providing high-speed internet for St. Clement's Church and residents in McGregor, ON be approved.

Carried

7. Unfinished Business

EMHC26-01-68

Moved By Richard Kokovai
Seconded By Marnie Aldridge

That all reports and updates of the items listed in Agenda 6. Unfinished Business be received.

Carried

7.1 Greater Marketing and Public Education about Heritage - Ongoing

7.2 Official Plan Update - Ongoing

7.3 Heritage Grant Program

7.3.1 Updates to the Heritage Grant

Ms. Jabbour provided an overview of the presentation from July 2025, reviewing the available grants and proposed changes. A report will come before Council on February 2, 2026 detailing the history and use of the Grant program. We are proposing to provide the opportunity to access multiple grant applications over time a new accessibility grant, heritage organization operating grant and potentially a barn quilt grant. Criteria will be refined and further consultation with the Heritage Network and Committee will continue.

7.4 Heritage Designation and Interpretive Plaque Program - Ongoing

7.5 Listing and Designating Properties and Heritage Districts - Ongoing

7.6 Cemeteries

7.7 Studies and Master Plans - Ongoing

7.8 Heritage Walking Tour and Digital Component - Ongoing

7.8.1 Jane's Walk Update

The Town of Essex participated in the Jane's Walk last April, which was very successful; however, due to resource constraints we will not be pursuing this event this year. Other organizations including the Train Station and HEIRS will be participating. The deadline to apply is February 1, 2026.

7.9 Cultural Master Plan - Ongoing

7.10 Historically Significant Name Registry - Ongoing

7.11 Cultural Heritage, Indigenous History - Ongoing

7.12 Barn Quilts

7.13 Heritage Week 2026 - February 16-22, 2026

7.13.1 Heritage Week Events

This year marks 10 years of celebrating Heritage Week within the Town of Essex. Our theme this year is "10 years of celebrating our story." The draft itinerary was presented to the committee and will be posted to the website.

Summary below:

ECHRS Explosion Display – Feb 14 & 17

Displays on the 1980 Essex explosion at the Essex & Community Historical Research Society.

CTMHV Family Day & February Activities – Feb 16

Free admission, children’s activities, and crafts at the Canadian Transportation Museum & Heritage Village. Admission-by-donation Feb 17–20 Rail Expo: Public expos Feb 1, 14, 15, 21, 22; Train Show Feb 7–8 Paint & Sip Fundraiser: Feb 27–28

Steam & Gas Engine Museum – Feb 16

Tours, lunch, kids’ games, and weather-dependent people-mover rides.

Youth & Community Heritage Awards – Feb 17

Council to recognize this year’s heritage award recipients at the 6:00 p.m. meeting.

Heritage Network Meeting – Feb 18

Invite-only meeting for local heritage organizations to discuss updates.

Essex Railway Station Screening – Feb 18

Screening of a Heritage Essex video with memorabilia displays, plus tea and coffee.

Storytelling Workshop – Feb 19

Workshop led by Anne Beneteau at the Maedel Community Centre; registration required.

Heritage Colchester Event – Feb 21

“Once Upon a Time in Colchester” family drop-in event with costumed storytellers at Christ Church.

Social Media Activities – All Week

Daily heritage-themed posts on the Town’s Facebook page and a Heritage Week Quiz with prizes.

Heritage Bursary - \$500 bursary available for post-secondary students studying history, anthropology, archaeology, or related fields.

All students JK–Grade 12 in the Town of Essex will receive heritage-themed sticker sets, based on postcard designs.

Distribution for Harrow-area students attending out-of-town high schools to be reviewed; surplus stickers may be made available at community locations.

Class of 2026 Initiative - Essex High School graduates will receive an Essex High School tote bag with Essex-branded swag and bursary information.

The full catalog of previous colouring and activity books will be made available online.

8. New Business

8.1 Town of Essex Heritage Newsletter

A Heritage Colchester member suggested that the Town consider creating a heritage newsletter, bi-annually or quarterly, to highlight updates from local heritage organizations and general heritage education. It could be posted online and available to anyone.

EMHC26-01-69

Moved By Richard Kokovai

Seconded By Marnie Aldridge

That the Heritage Committee recommend to Council that Administration be directed to explore the creation of a Town of Essex Heritage Newsletter for publication on the Town of Essex website.

Carried

9. Adjournment

EMHC26-01-70

Moved By Laurie Kowtiuk

Seconded By Lorrie Stephenson

That the meeting be adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Carried

10. Future Meetings

Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 5:00 p.m at the Harrow Arena Community Room, 243 McAfee Street, Harrow, ON.

Chair

Recording Secretary