



**The Corporation of the Town of Essex**  
**Arts, Culture and Tourism Meeting Minutes**

February 11, 2026, 5:00 pm  
Barnett Room, Essex Centre Sports Complex, 60 Fairview Ave W, Essex, ON N8M 1B6

Present: Chair - Atkinson, Nicole  
Councillor - Allard, Brad, Ward 3  
Councillor - Hammond, Rodney, Ward 4  
Member - Freele, Peter  
Member - Maguire, Grant

Regrets: Vice Chair - Meloche, Richard  
Member - Quinn-Ouellette, Diane  
Member, Raji, Kemmy

Also Present: Sarah Newton, Manager, Recreation and Culture  
Trevor Martin, Recording Secretary

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

**1. Call to Order**

Nicole Atkinson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:16 PM.

**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 declaration of conflicts of interest noted at this time.

**4. Adoption of Published Agenda**

**4.1 Arts, Culture and Tourism Meeting Agenda for February 11, 2026**

**ACT26-02 -001**

Moved By Councillor Allard  
Seconded By Grant Maguire

**That** the published agenda for the February 11, 2026 Arts, Culture and Tourism Meeting be adopted as presented.

**Carried**

## **5. Adoption of Minutes**

### **5.1 Arts, Culture and Tourism Minutes for January 14, 2026**

#### **ACT26-02 -002**

Moved By Grant Maguire

Seconded By Councillor Allard

**That** the minutes of the Arts, Culture and Tourism meeting held January 14, 2026 be adopted as circulated.

**Carried**

## **6. Unfinished Business**

### **6.1 Essex Holiday Lights Tour**

The Committee discussed potential changes to increase participation in the Essex Holiday Lights Tour including event marketing and promotion, the entry process, and award categories for future events. After discussion, the Committee decided to provide awards in the following categories for the next event:

- Griswold Award (Residential)
- Classic Christmas Award (Residential)
- Business Award

### **6.2 Downtown Essex Tea Party**

The Committee discussed event logistics including catering options, food service, entertainment, and guest prizes.

### **6.3 Tune Up the Parks**

The Committee discussed the format for the 2026 Tune Up the Parks event and after discussion decided to continue with the same format as the 2025 event. They also discussed potential partnerships with local community organizations for Tune Up the Parks.

### **6.4 Committee Projects Update**

Sarah Newton, Manager, Recreation and Culture, updated the Committee on the progress of the Our Rural Roots and Sports in Essex Murals. She added that cement bases could be installed under the butterfly benches and that she would move forward with ordering benches. The Committee discussed potential locations for Butterfly Benches in each of the four wards.

Sarah Newton also provided an update on the Committee budget for 2026.

## **7. Strengthening Rural Vitality through Arts and Culture - Ontario Chamber of Commerce**

Sarah Newton, Manager, Recreation and Culture encouraged Committee members to review the presentation by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

## **8. New Business**

There were no items added under new business.

## **9. Adjournment**

**ACT25-02 -003**

Moved By Councillor Hammond

Seconded By Councillor Allard

**That** the meeting be adjourned at 6:28 PM.

**Carried**

**10. Future Meetings**

March 11, 2026 at 5:00PM

Location: Essex Centre Sports Complex - Barnett Meeting Room

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Chair

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Recording Secretary