

General Correspondence:
Recommended Cultural Heritage Action Plan, 2020-143

To whom it may concern

I am pleased to see in today's Guelph Mercury Tribune, Thursday, Jan. 7th, 2021, the subtitle, "New proposed motion would extend heritage candidates to parts of city of value to indigenous communities" by Graeme McNaughton. I would add such additional heritage candidates are of value to non-indigenous communities as well in our pluricultural society.

I raised concerns about "the Eurocentric focus of the plan", limited to post-1827 settlement, as well as the erasure of indigenous heritage at a public consultation held by the City in 2019. The city staff were most attentive to the public's concerns and listened to a First Nations elder in attendance at this consultation.

I would endorse an amendment for council to "consider and evaluate candidate cultural heritage landscapes identified as having cultural heritage value or interest by" a pluricultural society which includes Indigenous and Black communities among others.

As for possible consultants with regards to Indigenous landscapes please engage Gary Warrick, Professor in the Indigenous Studies and History programs at the Brantford Campus, Wilfrid Laurier University and Paul Racher, a Principal at ARA Ltd., Ontario's oldest archaeological and heritage consulting firm and an advocate for the recognition of Indigenous rights in archaeological and heritage planning.

We know for example the Speed River corridor has been an Indigenous, geese-hunting location as recently as the 1840s with evidence of encampments at the former Turf Grass Institute property and around Hillcrest Park, both hilltop bluffs. Moreover, we know inmates (disproportionately Indigenous) harvesting potatoes at the front of the former Guelph Correctional Centre would uncover stone arrowheads, much to the consternation of the supervisory staff.

In the spirit of reconciliation and reparatory justice let's get this right.

Sincerely,
Dan Maitland

Dear Mayor and Councilors:

I am writing today to share my concern about an important aspect of Guelph's Cultural Heritage Action Plan (CHAP) which has been presented to you for consideration and approval.

While I appreciate the City's efforts to identify Cultural Heritage Landscape sites within Guelph, I fear that the plan's scope, as presented, is narrow in terms of

areas under consideration and, more crucially, that the heritage reflecting the rich history of our local Indigenous community is at best left for another day.

The CHAP mentions a potential “future update” for consideration of sites of “cultural heritage value or interest by an Indigenous community” and states that for any such consideration to be pursued, additional funds would need to be allocated. Essentially, the message sent by this language is: “We’re not interested in the Indigenous community - at least not on this pass.”

I would draw to your attention to the fact that later in this same report, when outlining the Provincial Policy Statement {PPS} defining a Cultural Heritage Landscape (CHL), Indigenous community inclusion is specifically enumerated in the definition.

Guelph may have been established as a settlement in 1827 when the first tree was hewn nearby by John Galt but, First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples have lived on this land or passed through this area for thousands of years before that. It’s time that we as a City learn, appreciate and honour that rich heritage as well.

The City and various local cultural & educational organizations have been building relationships with our local Indigenous communities. We have only just begun on this path together, yet already we have seen accomplishments that have made Guelph better for everyone. Some that come to mind are exhibits, programs and partnerships at the Civic Museum and Art Gallery of Guelph, joint initiatives with the Library and the creation of the Sacred Fire site with City staff. Any project that has invited active participation of Indigenous contributors will have explored new processes & perspectives and certainly seen enhanced results.

The Baker Street Development project may present several exciting opportunities for such input.

In the year 2021, when we make land acknowledgments before our meetings, we must do more than merely say the words. We must also act upon them. We speak of “land steeped in rich Indigenous history”. We need to learn more about that history. The best way to do that is with the meaningful involvement of the local Indigenous community.

I urge you, then, to amend the Cultural Heritage Action Plan and any related terms of reference to include real participation of the local Indigenous community and the serious consideration of sites identified by them as potential Cultural Heritage Landscapes. May such amendment reflect a sincere and specific commitment to be effective immediately.

Many thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Nancy Clarke