

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

10. Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan and Conservation Guidelines and Official Plan Amendments to Implement the District
 - Joe McCarthy, 16 Moir Street – indicating that he submitted a written communication on Monday morning to the Committee regarding the lack of availability of the Plan and the public documents; noting that the documents were not available at the Planning Division nor where they posted on the website until late last Thursday afternoon; indicating that it is difficult for the public to have legitimate public comment with such a short time to review the Plan; reading a statement from the Old East Heritage Conservation District Study which is applicable here; noting that the statement is under Implementation and reads as follows: “As the introduction of legislation that intimately affects the lives and homes of 1,000 homes should be undertaken like a heritage renovation, slowly and with due care; keeping that in mind, he submits the following comments, with respect to Figure 3 on page 25, which is the map of contributing and non-contributing resources, he believes that there are a number of properties incorrectly identified as contributing, which includes, but is not limited to, 146 Wilson Avenue built in 1969; 148 Wilson Avenue built in 1969; 36 and 38 Empress Avenue built in 1967; 79 Wilson Avenue built in 1957; 117 Wilson Avenue built in 1950; 148 Whancliffe Road South built in 1950; 119 Wharncliffe Road South built in 1950; advising that, additionally there is a cluster of post-World War II victory houses at 64, 66 and 68 Rogers Avenue built between 1948 and 1951 and 10, 11 and 12 Cummings Avenue constructed in 1949; advising that these buildings do not reflect the nine characteristic building types listed in the Heritage Study; noting that it is a neat built form of Victory housing; advising that the heritage consultants have cited as a reason for the sub area 3 not being included in the larger heritage district; suggesting that there is a mechanism by which a homeowner may file an application to have their property designated as non-contributing; requesting that the Committee reject that idea; noting that it should not fall to the individual homeowners to correct legislation that intimately affects their lives and homes; indicating that, with respect to the feedback on the draft Guidelines and Permits on page 115, where it is stated, during the second break out session, an overview of the draft guidelines and permitting process was presented and participants were asked to provide feedback on the Guidelines and Permits that may be used to protect and maintain heritage characteristics through the following questions; indicating that, to that end, the questionnaire for the breakout session did ask open ended questions on values, characteristics, guidelines and other considerations that should be in place for homes and commercial properties and landscaping public spaces but what was not done was to include a copy of Table 1 “Heritage Alteration Permits” in the presentation materials, what was not done was to ask the community for direct feedback on a Policy that had already been written; indicating that, to him it defies logic to not include the one piece of the heritage district plan that has not been an immediate and physical impact on the homeowner, the one piece of legislation that intimately affects the lives and homes of households; clarifying that he is not speaking against a heritage designation but he is challenging the Study and the Plan that came out of it; summarizing, he is asking the Committee to do three things; advising that the first is to defer this matter until a later meeting when the public has had adequate time to review the Plan; indicating that the second is to send the Study back to the heritage consultants for a proofread to determine which properties are contributing and non-contributing; indicating that the third is to direct the consultants to have a second public stakeholder meeting with explicit directions to include Table 1 and ask for direct feedback on each of the 38 areas that require permits; and, indicating that, if there is a concern that a delay means that heritage conservation designation will not be in place before the interim by-law expires, he suggests that the type of intensification that was a concern and started this matter is adequately addressed by the zoning changes through the near campus neighbourhoods and the introduction of legislation that intimately affects the lives of 1,000 homes to be undertaken slowly and with due care.

- Marcel Goulet, 5 Leslie Street – expressing appreciation to Mr. C. Parker, Senior Planner; advising that he and his wife love our Blackfriars area; noting that he says “our” because they are very possessive of it; indicating that, for the most part, it has been a working class area for 150 years; advising that the house that they live in was built and occupied by a gentleman named Mr. James Bolton and his wife Jessie; indicating that their house is celebrating its 140th birthday this year; indicating that, when he gets around to exposing the original tongue and groove, he believes that their house will be a gem; cringing to think that it could face a wrecking ball; advising that, over the past three decades, his wife and he have refurbished five century homes in the City of London; noting that three of these homes were in Old North and their current home is their second labour of love in Blackfriars; indicating that he is a hobbyist renovator, he has no concerns on the pending designation of their neighbourhood or the heritage permits that may be required for certain improvements; advising that he thinks that some opposition to this designation is rooted in misunderstanding; advising that he fully supports Blackfriars becoming a Heritage Conservation District; and, indicating that, if not being for wife being tired of dust on her cornflakes, he would have no hesitation to take on another century home in this wonderful, historically significant neighbourhood.
- Jan Delaney, 7 Carruthers Avenue – advising that she received a Certificate of Appreciation from Ken Sadler, former City Clerk and the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee in recognition of the preservation of London’s heritage and quality of life displayed by the enhancement of the property located at 7 Carruthers Avenue; indicating that her house was built in 1876, has been through the wars, two floods and was occupied by people who did not care about its preservation; advising that she has lived in the house for 22 years; and, advising that when she first moved to the neighbourhood, she was really attracted by the quality of life that she could see there and by the heritage that surrounded it.
- Linda Munn, 37 Wilson Avenue – expressing sincere gratitude in having the opportunity to share her heartfelt thoughts about her home and her community in the Blackfriars neighbourhood; indicating that her father, who was born and raised in Glasgow, Scotland and her mother, who was born and raised in a little village in Greece, both settled in Canada after the war; noting that they were grateful to live in this free and peaceful Country and fortunately found their first home in the Blackfriars area where she was born a few years later; indicating that they rented the upper level of a two storey home from a family who became their lifelong friends; noting that they were the first of many neighbours who became like family to us, one of whom was a dear man who, had recently, at that time, arrived from Latvia, who became her lifelong beloved Uncle, a kind man she grew to love throughout her life and was blessed to care for him in his later years until he passed away two months ago; remembering that he used to rent rooms back then to students; reiterating that there were students way back then and there were student rentals; advising that every year, as children, they would look forward to these students who would joke and tease us; reiterating that they all loved the students and they were all sad at end of year when they had to go; indicating that, as today, they still have students and welcome them as part of their neighbourhood; indicating that she remembers her parents telling her how accepting the whole neighbourhood was, of each and every one, regardless of how different they were, what colour their skin was, what language they spoke and so on; indicating that they were all taught to rejoice in our differences and their differences; advising that she treasures those memories and has learned how important it is to implement those ideals in her life; indicating that, throughout her early years in Blackfriars, she grew close to her childhood friends and their families, many of those who had very deep roots in the Blackfriars area for several generations; recalling that several of her schoolmates parents knew each other as classmates from their own school days at Empress Avenue Public School and such a unique situation that was; noting that we found out that you had to behave because you knew that your parents knew each other and would stick together if necessary, and so they did; advising that the homes we lived in were as different and unique as we were; indicating that they lived in many different sizes and styles of homes, some people rented their homes and some owned them, some were small cottage type homes, some brick, many clapboard, both single and two storey homes, but no two homes were the same; remembering, as a very young child, always being able to find her way home

because every home was different and that continues to remain one of the unique characteristics of their neighbourhood; advising that many things have changed since the day her parents moved to the Blackfriars neighbourhood back in the 1950's but a great deal of the unique characteristics they spoke about and experienced remain today; indicating that we still maintain a strong sense of community, the same qualities of community acceptance, tolerance, cohesiveness, are still part of who we are; advising that their homes are as diverse as its residents, we continue to welcome our newcomers and our students; and, growing up in Blackfriars, none of us were very wealthy in the monetary sense but we can all certainly attest to being exceedingly rich through the neighbourly values we experienced and which we continue to live on throughout all these years.

- Shirley Clement, 2 Carruthers Avenue – advising that their house is located at the east end of Carruthers Avenue, right at the River, by the walkway; expressing appreciation for the opportunity to address the Planning and Environment Committee regarding the granting of heritage status to our neighbourhood; expressing gratitude to the City staff and the consulting team for all the hours and the expertise that they have devoted to this project; advising that her comments will pertain mostly to the natural history of Blackfriars; advising that she grew up in Old North and together, she and John raised a family on both Colborne Street and Piccadilly Street; indicating that, in the Spring of 2002, by happy chance, they found and fell in love with two adjoining lots that they bought on Carruthers Avenue; noting that this occurred before they even went inside the house that existed; also noting that they stood there in a tangle of trees, overgrown shrubs, two huge climbing roses and a few old peonies and the noise of the city disappeared; advising that they were almost in the centre of Downtown London and all we could hear was birds; advising that, yes, they were obviously interested in the house, but it was the location and the overgrown garden that they first fell in love with; indicating that, here was a heterogeneous eclectic neighbourhood of smallish, by and large charming, older homes actually on the river and 10 minutes from the market and downtown; advising that the original one floor house was built in 1875 and the two storey brick front was added in 1896; during our subsequent major renovation, of which they kept a detailed photographic record, they found that the original foundation was made of creosoted logs; advising that, when they stripped the wallpaper off the dining room, they discovered, 38 inches off the floor, the waterline stain from the 1937 flood, which they have retained under a new piece of Plexiglas as part of the living history of the house; noting that there is more evidence of this flood and of other floods over the centuries was uncovered, literally, as they went to bury the service lines, as required, to the box at the back of the property; indicating that, because she was planning an extensive woodland garden and intended to plant many new Carolinian trees and native shrubs, they insisted that the lines be laid in a new conduit, 24 inches deep; noting that, at the bottom of this trench, they had still not come to end of the topsoil; advising that we had something almost unique in London, at least 24 inches of fabulous alluvial topsoil deposited here in Blackfriars over the centuries by the river; advising that they do not have the meager four inches of topsoil that builders routinely put back on top of hard pan subsoil compacted by all the huge building machinery in all too many new subdivisions in London; advising that this “soil” will never support the root structure for replacing the large, mature trees that were cut down to make way for cookie cutter houses and condos; advising that, in Blackfriars, they had found the very best possible soil for a garden, real soil that made Petersville the natural early market garden for London; noting that this soil will support, in the future, a renewed tree canopy which this Forest City claims to desire; indicating that, over the 12 years that they have lived here, they have nurtured this soil further by spreading at least 150 cubic yards of natural cedar mulch and compost so that the trees that they have planted will continue to flourish for future generations; advising that other finds followed, a number of huge cottonwood trees line sections on both the walkway and the River and more large mature trees dot the neighbourhood; advising that they are hopeful of having these trees designated as heritage trees in the near future; indicating that beaver are regularly spotted at the Rivers edge; noting the she knows that they can be a nuisance, but kids on the walkway love to watch them and their families; advising that herons are a common sight fishing in the rapids and they have had pairs of Baltimore Orioles at their feeders; advising that

every Spring, pairs of Mallard ducks and distracted geese wander our streets searching frantically for good nesting places; advising that they have a well-used community vegetable garden, complete with a new gazebo, which was supported by a Sparks grant for neighbourhood improvement and a small shady park which is used daily by the neighbourhood home daycares; indicating that there are also many other charming private gardens, enough to have merited at least one fundraising summer garden tour that she is aware of, devoted solely to the Blackfriars neighbourhood; advising that their neighbours at 89 Wilson Street have a treasured collection of well over 100 peonies and tree peonies inherited from the previous owner, John Upmalis, that would rival any national peony collection in England; and, advising that all of these natural attributes contribute hugely to the unique character and heritage of Blackfriars and, she believes, reinforce the need for it to be protected for future generations of all Londoners by a national heritage designation.

- Sue Spindler, 81 Wilson Avenue - expressing gratitude to the City Council for its endorsement last May to support our neighbourhoods bid to preserve the cultural and architectural heritage of this unique community at the Forks of the Thames by offering this opportunity to be considered as a heritage conservation district; indicating that, rich in history, City Council has already bestowed special heritage status on Labatt Park, the Blackfriars Bridge and the some 60 homes that you have already heard about; advising that her interest in preserving the architectural or physical heritage of this neighbourhood seems to run in her bones; advising that her grandfather was a grocer in the hood in the 1930's and his store was ravaged by the flood in 1937; indicating that, with his grade 3 education, he made good a promise to his family and to himself to do what he could to prevent recurring flooding in the area by campaigning for City Council, securing a spot as Alderman for the area and then joining the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority; advising that he travelled to Tennessee with former Mayor Dr. Cameron Wilson to learn about river damming; indicating that the report that he made to Council, upon their return, led to the construction of the Fanshawe Dam; advising that the 56 year high water level in 2008, the year she and her husband purchased their home on Wilson Avenue was no match for the dam that her grandfather worked hard to build; advising that they are the third family to own their home in 159 years; advising that they are proud to tell the story of the original owners daughter being picked up off the front stairs inside their home by a rowboat that came in the same front door that they walked through the day they took possession; advising that with lots of sweat, tears and not much blood at all, they have lovingly, with the help of their children, done their best to restore the home that Alexander Leslie built in 1855; advising that they love the story of the home as much as they love its local brick, the gothic windows, the one remaining pediment, the original floors, the same stair and railing and newel post that Bessie Leslie clung to in 1937; noting that they are going to get the rest of the pediments fixed; understanding that it is impossible to please all people all of the time and there are obviously differences of opinion on specific issues; however, she believes that to suggest, as some have, that we, who seek simply to maintain the existing scale of buildings when considering future development are self-serving is to ignore the loud gasp that went around these Chambers last May when the proposed development for 108 Wilson Avenue was put up on the screen in the Council Chambers; advising that the vast majority of the people in attendance were truly shocked by the gargantuan stature of the building; and, furthermore, to suggest that they are self-serving because they want Blackfriars-Petersville to be accorded the status of heritage conservation district to boost their own property values is to suggest that altruism drowned in the flood; advising that this is one of London's first neighbourhoods and they live happily among a population diverse in almost every way; families, owners, renters, students, young and old, beside the river, a short walk to the city; and, indicating that she would like to think that preserving its cultural and architectural heritage would be a common goal for all of us.
- Kevin Bice, 2 Leslie Street – advising that they have a smaller number of residents out today, but over the last year, and it has almost been a year to the day that there were here for the first time, there has been a tremendous amount of community interest and support for this project; indicating that he should start by indicating that there are two basic truths about which there is no question when it comes to this issue; advising that the first truth is that Blackfriars is a historic district; noting that it is not a question of designating it, it is a historic district; advising that, in 1808, Joshua Applegarth established a house and a distillery and various other businesses near Blackfriars Bridge quite a bit before Peter McGregor built the first house in London in 1826; indicating that they have been here a long time and perhaps predate the history of London, the city; advising that, in 1854, Samuel Peters established Petersville and Kensington as the first subdivisions or developments in London; reiterating that they are very much a part of a historic area; advising that, secondly, and almost more importantly, Blackfriars history is

integral to London's history; indicating that they are unique in that they form a part of London's history that no other area in the city does; advising that the people who built and fed London came from Blackfriars for over 100 years, the market gardeners, the cops, the carpenters, the bricklayers, et cetera; indicating that London West was an independent village for decades before it was forced by financial instability to join London in 1897 and when it did, it joined on London's terms rather than its own; indicating that the floods of 1883 and 1937, that everybody associates with the area, are very much part of London's history but it is the Blackfriars area that took the brunt of the damage for these floods; reiterating that the real question is not whether or not it is a historic district; indicating that the real question is how to best preserve the history and the culture of Blackfriars but, at the same time, to encourage reasonable and appropriate growth; believing that it is a truism that if you protect and preserve something without also encouraging its ability to grow and develop, then you will kill it so it is important that we find that balance; expressing appreciation to read in the heritage conservation district plan that the policies that were set up set the direction for change management; advising that it is not the intent of these policies to stop or freeze change but to appropriately manage change in a manner that is consistent with the cultural heritage value of Blackfriars/Petersville heritage conservation district; indicating that it is important, and he believes that it is often misunderstood, that these guidelines are being established to help guide growth, not to freeze growth; indicating that a heritage conservation district is not just a repository of individual resources, bits and pieces of architecture and structural elements, but it also reflects the meanings and values of the inhabitants and that is certainly something you have been hearing from Mrs. Spindler and Mrs. Munn, more almost than the architecture of the area, is the values that the district represents; indicating that, another point that is worth making, is that for a long time now, the City of London has been supporting and trying to develop this area; advising that, back as far as 1976, the West London District Plan said that they were trying to create a conservation and rehabilitation of a stable residential neighbourhood; reiterating that this is not a new issue; advising that, in 1993, the West London Area Improvement Plan invested \$1,800,000 of London's taxpayers money over four years in infrastructure in the Blackfriars/Petersville area; advising that, in 1994, the Petersville neighbourhood project was a major heritage and urban study by the London Advisory Committee on Heritage, in connection with the City, and with the full support of the community; indicating that, last summer, in 2013, the Great Near Campus By-law was enacted to help preserve and manage the growth of the area; advising that you have heard a lot about the character of the area as seen by residents, that it is a stable, low-density residential area that is defined by the river, that they have affordable, unpretentious homes, that it is a mixture of renters, owners, students, retirees, of families with first homes and many generational long-term residents; indicating that they have had criticism, in the press and personally, that they are elitists who dislike students and are enacting this simply to keep students out; indicating that students are an integral part of their neighbourhood and, in fact, he thinks it is very interesting that one of the properties, 108 Wilson Avenue, that they were so concerned about last year, is now occupied by five young men attending Fanshawe who are wonderful neighbours and who regularly consult with the neighbours around them and maintain the property very well; indicating that he believes that that speaks well about how the neighbourhood can work; discussing how to look at the history of Blackfriars; indicating that he believes that most people are aware of the visible landmarks in the city, such as Empress Avenue Public School, the Blackfriars Bridge, Labatt Park, et. cetera and even some of the details like the unique Open Doors, of which there are many in the area; advising that what he thinks it is important to understand and why it is really important to establish a heritage conservation district rather than simply designate individual monuments is that there is an invisible and overlooked history of the area; advising that Mrs. Clement already alluded to 24 inches of rich alluvial soil, it is the most rich soil certainly in the city and probably in a lot of southern Ontario; reiterating that they have 24 inches of it, which is unique and that attests to the history of the area, that is why there were the market gardens here that fed the city and it is why the gardens, which brought his wife and him to live in this area, are so plentiful and so rich in the area; advising that one of the first houses in the Blackfriars area is located at the corner of Albion Street and Blackfriars and it is a very unprepossessing white brick house, with no London doors, no wonderful gables, it is a very simple looking house with an enormous tree on its corner; advising that they know that it was built some time before 1840 and that it was a hunting cabin which tells you something about what the area was like back then; reiterating that there is not a lot that would draw people's eyes to that building as it is not a spectacular building but it is certainly, if it was demolished, we would lose a very important part of the history of the area; indicating that the odd thing about the area is that the diversity of the buildings in the area, the very thing which a lot of people look at and say, well home come this is to be considered historic, the very diversity of the area is testament to the history of the

area, it is diverse because many of the houses were damaged or even swept away by the floods of 1883 and 1937 and it is because of that that we created this rather eclectic neighbourhood which is our heritage; indicating that the fact that the houses are close to the street, in some cases you almost trip over edges of houses going along the sidewalk, and the fact that many houses have porches mean that people sit on the porches and talk to each other as they go by and with the trees on the boulevards, it creates a unique atmosphere that is certainly very very different than the suburbs in which houses are set far back and where the porches are on the back of the houses; advising that there is a lost built history in the area; advising that one of the things that has intrigued him as an artist is the Saunby Mill; noting that it is not the Saunby Mill that everyone is familiar with where they had to get the scraps of leather, but the Saunby also bought the Blackfriars Mill, which is now long gone and to which there is a plaque in Harris Park; indicating that there is an indication of the mill race that was there with a small with a small wooden fence when you come down to the bottom of the hill in Harris Park but most people do not know what that means; indicating that another thing that has really intrigued him as an artist, is that there was a dam that crossed the river there which is visible in early photographs, but there is no sign at all of the structure of that dam now; noting that that was early flood management and early aesthetic management of the area, but that is a part that has completely disappeared; indicating that some people may have walked along the walkway along the river and looked down into the river just north of the ballpark and may have noticed these rather odd saw toothed, jagged edged bits of concrete lying in the water; advising that those are parts of a saw toothed road that was laid out on Mount Pleasant and some of the other streets in the area and that saw toothed road was a patented system for creating an inexpensive road, on what was then, muddy streets; indicating that, when those streets were paved, the city people, at the time, simply lifted those things up and chucked them in the river so what we have is a historic and unique part of the history that was just lying at our feet but which we have no idea of what it represents; reiterating that Blackfriars is a unique and historic area in London, of that there is no question; indicating that, simply preserving the historic landmarks would not protect its uniqueness and its value as a community within the city; advising that it is important to create guidelines for the whole area to maintain its identity; indicating that if some people consider the buildings in our area are trivial and rather young in comparison with the great cities of Europe, Rome, France and Italy, it is worth remembering that if we knock these buildings down that they will never be 400 or 500 years old and they will never be a testament to our history; expressing agreement with Mr. McCarthy that heritage designation should be like heritage restoration, it should be undertaken slowly, so he would hope that, having established a heritage conservation district for Blackfriars and ongoing dialogue between the community and the city could continue because he thinks that that is really the only and best way to really represent this area the way that it is; taking an advertising moment, in order to give you an idea of what this community means, if you were to wander down by Blackfriars Bridge on June 14 or June 15, 2014, you would find that the bridge is part of a Provincial historical event called Trails Open and there will be a historian there, there will be photography workshops and there will be kids' activities to commemorate and to point out the importance of this bridge in the communication of this area of London; and, advising that if you are around Blackfriars on September 20, 2014, they are going to invite 50 to 80 artists from the Gallery painting group and other groups to come and paint the Blackfriars area; indicating that it is going to be a major city event that he invites people to to show you how proud they are to bring people in and to see it and to bring artists in to represent them; and, advising that, for this event, the City has given them their confidence and has awarded them a Sparks grant to help them achieve that.

- Arnon Kaplansky, 599 Maitland Street – enquiring as to the fee that the City paid for the consultant hired by City; enquiring as to the amount of time that was spent by the Management team to create the heritage district; noting that approximately 400,000 people live in the city and they would like to know the expense to satisfy this group of people and maybe, if he takes his glasses off, there is going to be 1,000 people here; enquiring as to whether or not the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, suggested to the Neighbourhood Association and to the Municipal Council, that the only way to stop development will be to turn it into a historic area; advising that the *Heritage Act* was not enacted for that purpose; and indicating that, to use the *Heritage Act* to combat the *Planning Act* and to deal with the Provincial Policy Statement in a different manner is not right; advising that if you want to turn all of the city into historical and drive down the property values by 10 percent or 15 percent, by all means, do that, but he does not think this is the right way to go; indicating that the Planning Agenda shows the future of the City; and, indicating that there are no planning applications here, it is matters relating to the Ontario Municipal Board and a self-propelled work by the management team to create themselves jobs and he thinks the future of the city is bleak if we are going to continue this way.