

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING - Request for Demolition of Heritage Listed property located at 660 Sunningdale Road East
- Peter Sergautis, owner – indicating that he purchased the property in 1986; stating that it was always his intention to develop the property and to have the main barn as a focal piece of the development; noting that they submitted an application with a design charette; advising that a number of city staff and community leaders were present and they had a new urbanist development proposed; however, the plan was turned down; pointing out that the plan that has been approved did not allow for the preservation of the main barn as two roads criss-cross the location of the barn and surrounding that area there is going to be a new urbanist park; reiterating that there was no possibility of preserving the barn; advising that he met an organic farmer that offered to take the barn apart and relocate it to another community and he seized that opportunity and the farmer and his people worked diligently for the last two months disassembling the roof structure by hand; when he was asked to stop the work by the city, then work ceased; indicating that the intent is that the barn will be relocated someplace else; with respect to the back barns, they were originally horse barns and they were never really intended to be preserved; advising that there is considerable deterioration to the buildings; indicating that the brick, which was referred to as very unusual has deteriorated, it cannot be repaired or replaced; there are two buildings on the block that would be north of the park, if you look at the main barn, that is where the urban park is going to go, where the back barns are, that is going to be a commercial block; expressing interest in exploring the possibility of saving one or two of those barns but there are a number of issues including that the barns are in a considerable state of disrepair; advising that he would like to do a structural assessment of the buildings and have conversations with staff to see if some of the approved blocks could be adjusted to accommodate one or two of the buildings and, if that is possible, perhaps one or both of the buildings could be repurposed; noting that it takes a bit of work and investment on his part; thinking it would be a great idea; going back, originally the main barn would have been the focal point of the community; reiterating that the two back barns, which were horse barns, might be used, but how is unclear; asking the Committee if perhaps we can defer the designation of those barns as being significant or historic until he has a chance to do the work and once he sees if they can be repurposed or utilized in some way with a development, they can go ahead with a designation at that time.
 - Karl Hodgins, 74 Sussex Place – indicating that he does not live in the neighbourhood now, but he did as a child; advising that he attended the London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH) meeting and the Committee received a verbal “yes, we agree” but he does not know if the Committee should have a written understanding of that so that they can look it over and a why they came up with their decision; stating that a number of people at the LACH meeting did not have a good sense of the physical property and you have to be there to really appreciate the situation; the pictures are nice but do not give you the same sense as being there; indicating that the LACH meeting was never turned over for a response from the general public as the Planning and Environment Committee (PEC) has here; expressing appreciation for the PEC hearing from the public; pointing out that he had never been at a meeting before, did not know what was going on and is trying to be polite and not say anything and the next thing he knew, it had been passed; advising that this was not a unanimous decision at the LACH, it was contested; noting that there were some people very passionate about saving the main barn; asking if the PEC has to have an official report as to why something is being done; wondering if the PEC can make a decision tonight; wondering what is heritage, it is the wow factor, it is something that we do not want to lose; believing the PEC should defer this matter to give the heritage people who understand these things better and can look into a history the opportunity to really pull it together and find out what they can about this property and then provide the PEC with a report on what the area is all about; doing research, he discovered that the property was first given to Mr. Sifton; believing that Mr. Sifton came over with Mr. Richard Talbot, who was a person who brought people in in 1819 to this area; noting that one of the people

that he brought in was Charles Sifton; believing he was the first Sifton in Canada, the first Sifton in North America; believing he found the information from an American publication; advising that Mr. Sifton's wife was Eliza Talbot, who was the sister of Thomas Talbot; thinking this information gives the property a little substance as opposed to this barn, that barn and I want to tear it down; encouraging the Heritage Planners to complete research on this property; relating to the location, it is on one of the highest points in all of London; noting that North London is approximately two metres short of the highest point and the property slopes down 17 metres from the barns; advising that, at the LACH meeting, they were advised that the whole thing is being moved to Strathroy.

- Sandy Levin, 59 Longbow Road – hoping that it can be determined how this property was missed; outlining that, as shown in the presentation, there were various points where designation was supposed to happen and it did not happen; referring to the most recent report, in 2014, which was approximately 35 pages and there was one paragraph about the heritage characteristic of the site; stating that, as Mr. P. Sergautis pointed out, there was an interest in retention way back when but staff said that it would not fit the plans for the area; expressing puzzlement over that statement; the second piece that he is finding really interesting in this, and he is a city boy so stuff like this, he thinks it is neat that a city has this historical and active farmland; reminding him a lot of where his wife is from, Champagne, Illinois, where they kept a round barn, which is unique to central Illinois, as part of a commercial strip plaza and conference centre; wondering why that did not happen here; referring to the list of other barns that are on the heritage inventory, what clearly happened here was Mr. P. Sergautis went forward and asked if he needed a permit and was told no; indicating that someone at staff needs to fix the process so that when someone asks to demolish a barn, there is someone who looks at the heritage inventory to say “Hold on a minute, it does need to go through a process before something like this happens again.”; advising that he is not sure why it got to this point because travelling along Sunningdale Road he saw the For Sale sign before the barn was disassembled and he talked to staff about it saying what are we going to do about this because it is a Priority 2 and it only happened when someone noticed that the roof was gone; indicating that he is not sure what the Committee is going to be able to do at this stage; appreciating Mr. P. Sergautis's point, it would be nice to put that back together; noting that he does not know who would pay for it but it would be a shame to lose the rest of the heritage buildings; asking the Committee to consider this carefully.
- Kelly McKeating, 329 Victoria Road, on behalf of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, London Branch – advising that the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, London Branch submitted a communication to the London Advisory Committee on Heritage and the Planning and Environment Committee which discussed some of the issues that Mr. K. Gonyou, Heritage Planner, raised as this is a rare and significant structure from an architectural and cultural perspective; pointing out that it is either significant or it is not, it is not a matter of maybe it is significant and they are going to wait a while to see how badly things are deteriorated or not; believing that it should be designated now; referring to the research done in 2002 and more recently does substantiate that; indicating that there are, as was pointed out in the ACO letter, many adaptive reuse abilities; advising that these are nice rectangular buildings that can be repurposed as small or large retail operations and there are many examples in the United States, in New England, as well as the Midwest, of round barns being preserved; noting that they are difficult to deal with because they are big and it is hard to deal with a circle but these are rectangular, there are a lot of windows, there are a lot of things you could do residentially as well as retail; pointing out that the larger barn is truly iconic and, as has been pointed out, as it stands on a hill it is really spectacular; remembering 20 years ago when she moved to London, when she would be driving between Kitchener-Waterloo and London, she always slowed down to look at that barn, it is just a spectacular thing and while she thinks that designation of the two smaller barns and preservation is critical, she thinks that some investigation of whether the larger structure, which is the really wonderful one, could be put back together; realizing that there is always the question of who is going to pay for it given the history but she does think some investigation should be done there; advising that there is significant concern as Mr. S. Levin has pointed out, about what has happened here, there should be some sort of checklist when people answer the phone and that should include before you answer a question about demolishing something, check the Inventory of Heritage

Resources; recommending that there should also be some consideration of communication to property owners to advise them that their property is listed on the Inventory of Heritage Resources; advising the property owners of the rules, of who to talk to if you have questions and if you want to do something with your property; pointing out that those are basic things that the City of London has not done to date; realizing that the failure to follow through on the 2002 recommendations connected to the Uplands North Area Plan are unfortunate, the failure to act and the failure of the city staff who were working with the owner here who did not seem to have in their mind that preserving these barns would be a really good thing and that we should be encouraging it; finding it very unfortunate and very sad; stating that, in addition to dealing with the current situation where she hopes that the Committee will decide to designate at least two of the three barns, she hopes that the Committee will investigate and help city staff deal with the unfortunate communications and misprioritization of this property in the past 15 years.

- Janet Hunten, 253 Huron Street – indicating that the largest of the three barns is the most interesting and elegant of the three barns; advising that it is sited on Bell's Hill as it is locally known after Mr. Bell who built it; believing that it is a tangible reminder of the war years, when she was in grade school and high school and everything they did was touched by the war effort, all the way from learning the silhouettes of the airplanes overhead to helping make quilts and helping their mothers wind wool to knit sweaters for seamen supplying England with food and munitions; pointing out that we have very little to remind us of the war; advising that few buildings were built because everything went to the war effort; stating that when she learned that this was part of that she was very much reminded of those days; urging designation.
- Nancy Tausky, Heritage Consultant, Grosvenor Lodge – advising that she was responsible for the assessment of these buildings that was done in 2002; noting that it was not a complete assessment, it was part of a survey that was done of the buildings along Sunningdale Road East in the Uplands North Area Plan; stating that she made two recommendations, one that all of the buildings be designated, all three of them, and two, that a more thorough report be done, a complete Heritage Impact Assessment; advising that neither of her recommendations was ever followed up on and any of the things that have gone on since 2002; advising that there are some communities that actually keep her informed of what is happening with the recommendations that she has made; noting that London seems to have forgotten them and she is rather disillusioned and unhappy about that; advising that when Mr. K. Gonyou, Heritage Planner, became aware of what was happening here, he asked her if she had old notes or photographs that might be useful; expressing embarrassment that she could not find them; noting that she has had a lot of moves lately, inheriting things from deceased relatives, moving offices and the question was asked at a bad time; noting that the photographs still have not been unearthed; advising that one of the things she could do is some of the research that she believed should have been done; indicating that Mrs. J. Hunten and herself did survey the area quite thoroughly for barns, they found the ones that are in the Planning and Environment Committee Agenda and the added communications and there was nothing like these, there was only one barn that was built entirely of hollow clay tiles and a couple that had used them as foundations; noting that even the building materials set these apart; stating that it proved that these barns are relatively unique, not only in using the hollow clay tiles in such a substantial way but using it in all three barns and having a cluster of barns like this; pointing out that they are very unique in their manner of building; indicating that, as Mr. K. Gonyou, Heritage Planner, pointed out in his Statement of Significance, the barns follow the habits for agricultural barns at the time but they also use an industrial method; illustrating, these are not just flat clay tiles, they are hollow tiles, like cement blocks only they are made of terra cotta with holes in the middle, which is good insulation; advising that, in these barns, it is not just one layer of tiles, rather there is a wall of these blocks, air space, and then another wall of these blocks, which would have given not only stability but tremendous insulation with all of that air; advising that the buildings also follow an industrial mode of building with reinforced cement piers that occur at regular intervals along the barn walls; pointing out that the larger barn is a model of 1940's modern barn craftsmanship; stating that the biggest influence on twentieth century barn building in Ontario was a series of books called the "Beattie Barn" books that came from an outlet in Fergus and there were recommendations about their dimensions, orientation and

ventilation; noting that these barns follow those recommendations and being put on a north-south axis, they recommended plenty of windows to keep livestock happy; indicating that the main thing that they did was to come up with a system of bracing in the barns to eliminate the old post and beams that use up space in the conventional nineteenth century barns, this method of bracing allowed for all of the braces to go along the outside of the roof which left quite a glorious space in the middle; noting that barn #1 had this; requesting that all three barns be designated; thinking that barn #1 is very important because of its site, because of its method of building, of construction; finding it very sad that it has been taken apart as far as it has but she does think that although it would not be as good as having the original, that it could be reproduced, that the pattern is available through the remaining braces on the south side of the barn, the walls are still intact and a new roof could be constructed; realizing that this would cost some money and she is not sure where it would come from, possibly various grants; stating that it is a very important barn because of its site, landmark status, the way in which it is built and because it is a barn; noting that it is a rather unusual barn; outlining that we have inherited a lot of barn as we have expanded the city and she believes it is very important that we acknowledge the agricultural past that has been enveloped now in a place with an urban character; believing that we need to keep some of that agricultural past; expressing concern with what happened to her report as she has already pointed out and to the fact that the whole heritage aspect of the barns seems to have been largely disregarded during this whole period of planning, right to the point of saying that any barn could be demolished without a building permit without checking the Inventory of Heritage Resources or checking with the Heritage Planners; indicating that someone indicated that they were not going to take the entire barn, that they were only planning to take the roof and the upper braces; wondering if this is correct; stating that what we are going to be left with here is a barn made of these hollow clay tiles, a barn that was a very significant feature in the landscape except that it will not have the upper story anymore; indicating that money is going to have to be spent on the demolition of that lower part on saving it or on reproducing what was there before; advising that she would like to see the latter.

- Susan Bentley, 34 Mayfair Drive – expressing support for designation; pointing out that the applicant is an old ally; advising that Mr. P. Sergautis did a development in Broughdale in the late 1970's and was an extremely reasonable person to deal with; stating that he had a far more intense plan than he ended up building and he negotiated with and respected the neighbours; listening to his presentation she heard echoes of that, he is willing to work with the city and is willing to consider adaptive reuse; stating that, as a Member of the Heritage London Foundation, she thoroughly supports anyone who is willing to consider adaptive reuse of heritage properties; urging the Committee to consider working with Mr. P. Sergautis to ensure that these buildings survive.