

The British Methodist Episcopal Church
CONFERENCE OF CANADA FOUNDED: 1856 INCORPORATED: 1913
HEAD OFFICE: P.O. BOX 68, STN. E, TORONTO, ONT. M6H 4E1

Beth Emmanuel Church
430 Grey Street
London Ontario
N6B 1H3

TO:	Chair and Councillor's
FROM:	Beth Emanuel Church (Pastor) Rev. Dr Delta McNeish And Trustees
SUBJECT:	FUGITIVE SLAVE CHAPEL UPDATE MEETING ON Wednesday, April 11 2018

Report: Pertinent to FUGITIVE SLAVE CHAPEL, LACH and Beth Emanuel (BMEC) Church

LACH Mandate; “The London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH) reports to the Municipal Council, through the Planning and Environment Committee. The purpose of the London Advisory Committee on Heritage is to lead London in the conservation of its heritage through planning, education and stewardship, and to advise the City of London on the conservation of heritage resources in the community.

Timelines:

March 2013

When an application was applied for by the former owner of the Slave Chapel, the community came together to

1. Preserve the building from demolition

2. Move the building from 275 Thames Street to be placed beside the “Daughter Church” at 432 Grey Street. In London Ontario. Building was Moved on Nov 14 2014
 3. Combining efforts to restore the building to be used as a museum and an education place; teaching the public about Slavery, the Underground Railroad and London’s Black History.
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March 2013- 2017:

Matters that stalled the progress of the Fugitive Slave Chapel

- LACH and others arbitrarily went to the city of London to seek information about a separate charitable status for the Slave Chapel without the Church's knowledge. The Church was/is willing and able to give charitable receipts.
- Documents put forward by the Church to manage the Slave Chapel was refused several times
- Autonomy of the Chapel was requested
- From the projects inception the Slave Chapel has always had its own account. This Bank account was arbitrarily moved from the Church’s bank account to another bank, by Genet Hodder and others.
- LACH agreed to the use of the London Community Foundation for donations to the Chapel.
- Refusal to have the Church’s images on any documentation of the Slave Chapel. Showing a need for a total disconnection from the “Daughter Church”
- Meeting with General Superintendent Rev. Dr Chester Searles on these two occasions May 15th, 2016 and November 8, 2017 highlighted facts that key matters to the peaceful running of the project were still unresolved etc., (1) the mandate from LACH, are they an independent contractor (2) refusal to accept the Church’s volunteer forms and the decision to arbitrarily change those forms, then presenting their own volunteer forms. (3) Attempting to move forward in the project without signed governance and agreements.

Church’s response to presents question about the Slave Chapel’s finances;

- As stated above the Fugitive Slave Chapel's finances until the 27th of March 2017 has been under the watchful eye of Ms. Genet Hodder. If monies were mismanaged or misappropriated Ms. Hodder would be in full knowledge of such.
- A commitment to the public for transparency, accountability and responsibility.
- Books are open to the public, and accounts of both Beth Emanuel Church and the Fugitive Slave Chapel has always been and will be kept separate.

5) CONTINUITY.

"Over three years, we have explored options for future sustainability by first establishing a governance framework as mentioned earlier, which was passed by the project committee in April of 2015, and with the intent this year to review and improve it.

We adapted, from an existing management agreement for the historic Old St. Thomas Church and proposed a draft agreement that would clarify roles of the FSCPP steering committee vis à vis the Trustees of Beth Emanuel Church. This has not been signed or responded to by the Trustees of Beth Emanuel Church. Planning long term, we had hoped to create a sustainable future through the establishment of a Friends of the Fugitive Slave Chapel group, or other similar organization."

For the record, every governing document (that is mention here) and others presented by the trustee board of the Church was either received with animosity or ignored.

Please note documentation conflict with Page (1) paragraph (3).

"Our great disappointment was that after many months we were unable to achieve a management agreement between the Board of Trustees and the FSCPP, which would outline the responsibilities of each body similar to other agreements between a property owner and a managing body. We believe this unexpected dissolution was undemocratic because the changes made did not respect the FSCPP governance document and gave no opportunity for the existing committee to respond."

Model for the future:

Reflecting here is on the Slaves that built the Fugitive Slave Chapel after they ran for their lives to find a safe place in Canada. The Slaves lived and died in horror. Those that made it to Canada through pain carried a legacy of love, peace and respect. They were resilient. It is that type of resilience that has to be used to establish the Fugitive Slave Chapel Preservation Project as a model for change. What

caused a people who lived all their lives as “property” to find enough strength to build an edifice to worship God? Where did they find determination and strength of character to face the “Monsters” of prejudice, discrimination and racism? Are these “Monsters” still with us today? If they are, how do we get rid of them? Do we want to get rid of them? The blood of Slaves that stains the Fugitive Slave Chapel will be on our hands if we are not able to find ways to eliminate them.

More importantly, if these “Monsters” are with us we can bring the Fugitive Slave Chapel to completion but it will never reflect the values of a people who left for us a legacy of love, peace and respect. The legacy of the Slaves can never be portrayed through a flashy well reconstructed building. It must be done through these godly standards of love, peace and respect. Love that says I am “my brother’s keeper.” Peace that says I will hear you when you speak, I will not form conclusions about you and peace that says I will never force my opinions on you. This is the model that will cause the Fugitive Slave Chapel to continue to sing the songs that the Slaves sang; Songs such as” There is a balm in Gilead. “This song echoes hope, freedom and healing. Are we in need of hope freedom and healing from the wounds inflicted on us through prejudice, discrimination and racism? If we are wise we will step away from our own agendas to just rebuild the Fugitive Slave Chapel and come together and pray that the Almighty God who brought the Slaves to this land of Canada will help us to respect them through our determination to honor God and respect one another. Using their type of resilience not only will we honor God but slowly and surely we will change our communities through this well-built tapestry of love, peace and respect.

Community Endeavor:

INVITATION:

An Open House to

Present the finances and activities of the Slave Chapel

Present its past and future plans

Discuss Phase #2

Enjoy a time of refreshments

Venue: [430 Grey Street, London](#)

Date: June 2 2018

Time: 10am - 3pm