

The British Methodist Episcopal Church
CONFERENCE OF CANADA

FOUNDED: 1856



INCORPORATED: 1913

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Beth Emmanuel Church
430 Grey Street
London Ontario N6B 1H3
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Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Re: Fugitive Slave Chapel Preservation Project (FSCPP)

Dear Mr. Matt Brown, Mayor and Counselors,

We, as the Board of Trustees of Beth Emanuel Church are deeply concerned and confused with the process concerning the future of the Fugitive Slave Chapel Project which has been hastened through a few week of processes towards designation of Heritage Status while current major concerns and issues between the legal owner of the property and chapel (Beth Emanuel Church) and LATCH exist.

We have had no opportunity to speak on our behalf at any sub-committee level and consider the process thus far undiplomatic and bias. We respectfully ask that Mr. Mayor and city council send back a motion to accept designation of the Fugitive Slave Chapel to a sub-committee level in order that an agreement and resolve with the legal owners of the chapel and property (which is Beth Emanuel Church) and LATCH be reached before any further process of designation is considered.

Here are our concerns as the Board of Trustees of Beth Emanuel Church:

We have had no opportunity to comment or state our concerns in dealing with LATCH in a public forum.

We chose to dissolve the arm of LATCH known as the FSCPP Committee in January of 2018 for several reasons which were becoming a concern to the Board of Trustees of Beth Emanuel Church.

The final issue was the neglect of the Chapel, whereas a directive was given to the FSCPP Committee in November of 2017 to properly and securely wrap the Chapel, protecting it from the winter elements as the architect hired by the committee suggested that the Chapel was in danger of further damage if it was not wrapped with tarps through the winter. Not being done, the Board of Trustees of the church took the initiative to have the Chapel wrapped in late January 2018 nearly 3 months later. This set off a dispute of responsibility and the Board of Trustees chose to dissolve the FSCPP Committee for lack of trust.

There had been growing disputes as to the FSCPP Committee wanting what they called "Autonomy" from the church. They wanted to separate our church from the Chapel for what they said was for fund raising purposes. They moved the FSCPP account from the church's account at TD Canada Trust – without our knowledge to another institution. The accounts for the church and the chapel have always been separate, yet, in an attempt to create public questions members of this group recently made innuendos in the media suggesting that the church may use public funds meant for the chapel for church purposes. This is disgraceful and an attempt to bully the church.

Even after the FSCPP Committee were dissolved, attempts were made by some of its members to go into the Chapel bank account for reasons we do not understand. Our financial books are up to date, accurate and open to public scrutiny. However, we have recently uncovered several discrepancies in book keeping prior to the Board of Trustees resuming control that we need answered by the then FSCPP committee.

When the FSCPP Committee was dissolved in January of 2018, the members were immediately invited to join the Board of Trustees of Beth Emanuel to get the Slave Chapel back on track – together, with a new committee format that was respectful of the Church and rightful owner of the property and building. Some gladly expressed interest in remaining; others wanted nothing to do with it. Sadly, we have questions of anti-faith and discrimination of some of the members of this committee.

Why there was no attempt made in the past 5 years since the building was signed over to Beth Emanuel church and moved to our property to re-designate the building casts many questions. Suddenly it seems that LATCH is rushing through the process to designate the building. Why? This Chapel represents freedom for many Black slaves that made it to Canada and the London area, the same people that built Beth Emanuel Church...the daughter church. This is mother-daughter and located on the same property owned by our church. We have a story to tell here and it seems that history may be repeating itself with the treatment we are going through at this time over this little building that is a beacon of hope and continues to be such in the SoHo community as Beth Emanuel Church continues to carry on the legacy of championing the poor, the disadvantaged and lost in London through many successful programs, meals and advocacy.

We respectfully ask Mr. Mayor and council to do the right thing here by allowing the Church and rightful owners of the chapel and property to be heard and come to a respectful resolve to this issue so we can move forward in seeing this Slave Chapel being a light in London for freedom.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully yours,



Rev. Delta McNeish
Senior Pastor
Beth Emanuel Church
430 Grey St
London, On

- Cc Pastor Dan Morand
- Cc Pastor Simon Komon
- Cc Jennifer Johnson
- Cc Yvonne Sullivan
- Cc Lois Gosney
- Cc Tanya Park
- Cc Rev Dr Chester Searles