



TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU LAKES
Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee
Minutes

Thursday, August 21, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
Municipal Office, Chantry

Members Present: Howard French, George German, Chair, Diane Haskins, Ted Stewart, Sue Warren, Councillor Paula Banks, Sabina Barrett

Members Absent: David Gwynne, Allison Smith

Staff Present: Marie White, Economic Development and Cultural Heritage Coordinator, Mary Ellen Truelove, Clerk

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Roll Call

Regrets from Allison Smith and David Gwynne received.

Public members in attendance who signed in: Saoirse Carroll

Additions/Amendments to the Agenda

The Chair called for any additions or amendments to the agenda. None were heard.

Adoption of the Agenda

RECOMMENDATION MHAC 2025-32

Moved by Howard French
Seconded by Sue Warren

Be it resolved that the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC) adopt the agenda as presented.

Carried

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

The Chair called for disclosure of any pecuniary interests. None were declared.

Business Arising

Doors Open Rideau Lakes - Post Event Debrief: Rosanne Lake (For Information)

A very successful Doors Open Rideau Lakes event took place on August 16 and 17, 2025.

Attendance exceeded 3,000, welcoming people from all over the world. Rain on Sunday did not deter visitation. Mornings were better attended.

Promotion included media releases, website, brochures, itineraries, social media posters, editorial coverage (RTO9, Teachers on Call blog, Review Mirror, MyFM 88.1, online event and tourism calendars, Doors Open Ontario feature etc.)

The Doors Open Ontario website's dedicated page for Rideau Lakes received over 13,000 views, ranked number 22 among 3,000 pages. Top clicks were Old Stone Mill, Newboro Manor, McKinney House, and Wood mausoleum.

On the Experience Rideau Lakes Facebook there were 45 posts specific to the Doors Open event, reaching total views of over 164,000.

John Ronson took great photos posted on the Rideau Lakes Community Forum. The History and Genealogy forum was very complementary.

Highlights:

- The Wood Mausoleum featured a talk by Ted and Marion Outerbridge (illusionists)
- "Top 10 facts to know" handout was provided for St. Mary's Church in Newboro
- Documentary film viewing at the Old Town Hall in Delta.
- Colouring pages provided for the Red Brick School.
- A heritage walking tour of Elgin included two churches was scripted and delivered
- Mug shot at the Newboro "Jail"
- Heritage quilts from the 1800s displayed in Old Stone Mill
- Philippsville Baptist Church (now residence) restoration was exceptional (Historical Notes: It came close to demolition, Council did not de-designate. Brick making factory in Phillippsville 1850s and 60s).

Surveys have been sent out to hosts and site notes have been collected. Suggestions for the next event have been documented. Specifically, a host checklist, that sites are located in clusters of 3 in/near villages to allow people to stop, park, tour around, have

lunch etc., more directional event signs on the event days (notes for signs provided by Doors Open Ontario: metal stakes were flimsy and did not adequately support larger signs, text was small, more contrast for legibility, need arrows. Doors Open signs were designed for urban areas, not appropriate for long grass on roadsides), signs with dates would help.

Timing of the next Doors Open Event was discussed. A gap gathers momentum, maybe every 3 to 5 years. Committee members expressed that every 5 years is more manageable, since the event is a lot of work for site hosts.

In conclusion, the event was well done.

For the 2026 MHAC budget, consider \$15,000 for proposed projects. Doors Open Rideau Lakes demonstrates that with the appropriate resources we can accomplish a large project. A cemetery tour would be a good idea. More municipal involvement is requested. Example projects may include cemetery plot documentation, grant applications, archive projects, a project to highlight the Rideau Canal; Chaffeys Lockhouse and Newboro Blockhouse are two sites that are open for people to visit.

Cemetery Meet and Greet - Thursday, October 23

The Cemetery Meet and Greet is scheduled to take place at the Newboro Community Hall from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, October 23, 2025. A draft poster was included in the agenda package.

The following presentations have been confirmed:

- Sue Duncan of Morton Cemetery, Keeping Financial Records
- Mark Halladay of Robertson Cemetery, Updating By-Laws

Minutes

Minutes of the MHAC Meeting held July 17, 2025 were distributed to Committee as part of the Agenda package. The Chair asked for any errors or omissions. None were noted.

RECOMMENDATION MHAC 2025-33

Moved by Sue Warren

Seconded by Councillor Paula Banks

Be it resolved that the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee approves and adopts the Minutes of the MHAC Meeting held on July 17, 2025.

Carried

Staff Report: MHAC Action Listing (For information)

Staff spoke to the MHAC Action Plan included in the agenda package with an update on projects and their status.

Council Resolutions

The Rideau Lakes Early History statement was approved for inclusion in the 2026 Road Map.

New Business

Self-Guided Heritage Tours by Watercraft: Sabina Barrett (For Discussion)

To add to our collection of Self Guided Heritage Driving Tours, Heritage Walking Tours, Heritage Cycling Tours and Heritage Paddling Tours, the suggestion of a Heritage Boat Tour for the anniversary of the Rideau Canal (2026-2032) was discussed.

Ideas:

- Heritage Boat Tour from Smiths Falls to Jones Falls
- Include indigenous history and geological features
- Consider for the 2026 Budget process
- Include walking tours

Note: The PRHS provides guided Boat Tours on the Big Rideau.

Lombardy Heritage Walking Tour: Sabina Barrett (For Discussion)

MHAC Committee members recognized that Russell Joynt and Wayne Moodie are local experts regarding the heritage of Blacksmith Road in Lombardy, and that there is interest in a heritage walking tour.

Consider this project in the 2026 MHAC Budget as an addition to the series of heritage walking tours.

MHAC member Sabina Barrett is happy to help with research and documentation.

Correspondence/Events

The Early History of Rideau Lakes Area (For Information)

MHAC member Ted Stewart continues research on this topic.

Ontario Barn Preservation (For Information)

The Barn Counting Project and "Your Old Barn Study" projects are open for participation.

Reports from Committee Members

Councillor Paula Banks

- Add Portland Sound System to the Economic Development Committee Agenda
- For the Gallagher Property, the Portland CEC would like input. Continuation of the Steering Committee would be appreciated as options are considered for the Gallagher Property.
- Suggest QR Codes at the Cemetery to donate.

Howard French

- At the Doors Open event, attended 9 sites - 6 on Saturday and 3 on Sunday. Expressed thanks to all participants.

George German

- Cemetery meeting will be valuable. Suggest a genealogical tour, supported by MHAC.

Diane Haskins

- Heritage Boat day by PRHS was well attended. Community pride of beautiful workmanship on the boats. There were 30 boats on display, 20 in the water and 10 on shore. An interpretive centre in Portland would be great. One restored Dowsett Boat is now on display in the Emmanuel Heritage Centre (not open regular hours). The Gallagher property would be an ideal location.

Ted Stewart

- At Doors Open, Newboro did very well. Posted extra ads on social media, posters and brochures.
- Next Monday, NAHS monthly talk is by Dudley Hill of Stirling Lodge, the next is an historical talk about John Kilborn in two parts (September and October) by Dr. John Gray, a descendant of Benjamin Tett.
- Early History presentation will take place in Leeds.
- Talks are to raise money for stairs at the Blockhouse. Donations are welcome. Blueprints of the original have been located.

Sue Warren

- New exhibit on Textile production in Rideau Lakes and South Crosby in development featuring dresses, men's clothing and one 1870s Quilt. Aiming to open the exhibit by Thanksgiving 2026.
- Archives centre has been busy. Requests from the Genealogical Society and people researching historic homes. Diary 1907 to 1939 is being added to University of Guelph's Diary project.

Questions from the Public

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

George German, Chair

Marie White, Secretary