



Report to: Development Services Committee

Report Date: April 11, 2016

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**SUBJECT:** **Continuation of Interpretive Plaque Program for Markham Village Heritage Conservation District Properties**

**PREPARED BY:** George Duncan, Senior Heritage Planner, ext. 2296

**REVIEWED BY:** Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) That the report titled “Continuation of Interpretive Plaque Program for Markham Village Heritage Conservation District Properties,” dated April 11, 2016, be received;
- 2) That Council allocate up to \$6,000 from the Heritage Reserve Fund (Acct. No. 087 2800 115) to provide financial assistance to the Markham Village Conservancy, to fund the continuation of the interpretive plaque program in the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District;
- 3) That any funds not used at the completion of this program be returned to the Heritage Reserve Fund (Account No. 087 2800 115);
- 4) That Council approve the updated “Guidelines for Interpretive Plaques for Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest in Heritage Conservation Districts” which reflect a modest increase in the City’s contribution to \$175 per plaque due to rising costs;
- 5) And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Not applicable.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this staff report is to recommend a grant to the Markham Village Conservancy to assist with a portion of the cost for the continuation of the interpretive plaque program for heritage buildings located within the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Interpretive plaques have an educational value and enhance the heritage character of the community**

Interpretive plaques add value to heritage conservation districts by providing educational information and by helping to foster awareness of local heritage resources among property owners and visitors. Interpretive plaques on individual buildings typically include the name of the original owner, their occupation, and the date of construction of the building. The plaques also indicate which heritage conservation district the property is located in.

**The Markham Village Conservancy initiated a pilot project in 2008-2009**

In 2008-2009 the Markham Village Conservancy initiated a pilot plaque project on Peter Street, within the Mount Joy portion of the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District. The Conservancy designed a cast aluminum plaque made by a local manufacturer. An illustration of the plaque design is attached (Figure 1). The plaques have a blue background and raised lettering and border in brushed aluminum.

**The Conservancy proposed a cost-sharing program for the pilot project, which was supported by Council**

The Markham Village Conservancy proposed a cost-sharing program for the pilot project for 22 plaques on Peter Street. Property owners were advised of the opportunity to obtain a plaque. Based on 22 plaques, the cost of each one was \$350 plus applicable taxes (resulting in a cost of \$400 each). Property owners were asked to contribute \$100, the Conservancy contributed \$150 and for the balance, a \$150 grant from Markham's Heritage Reserve Fund was requested and approved by Council on November 25, 2008. The total amount of the grant was \$3,300 (City's portion, \$150 x 22 plaques).

**The pilot project was administered by the Markham Village Conservancy**

The Markham Village Conservancy created the promotional information directed to the owners of heritage properties, took in the plaque orders, ordered the plaques from the manufacturer, and distributed the plaques. The program was very successful, and resulted in several additional requests for plaques in the same area from property owners who were not part of the initial plaque order.

**Council has reviewed a policy document regarding interpretive plaques**

In addition to approving funding for the pilot project, at the November 18, 2008 meeting of Development Services Committee, Council reviewed a policy document titled "Guidelines for Interpretive Plaques for Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest in Heritage Conservation Districts." The guidelines, with proposed revisions, are attached as Appendix 'A.'

**Council supported potential funding for similar interpretive plaque programs in other Markham heritage conservation districts**

In 2010, Council supported potential funding for additional interpretive plaques for the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District, as well as for similar programs in Markham's other heritage conservation districts. Staff approached historical societies in Thornhill and Unionville to assess their interest in coordinating an interpretive plaque program. At this time, neither community has initiated an interpretive plaque program, therefore there have been no requests for funding from Thornhill or Unionville.

**OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:****There is local interest in continuing the interpretive plaque program within the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District**

The Markham Village Conservancy has requested additional funding from the Heritage Reserve Fund to continue their successful program. Residents in other parts of the

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Markham Village Heritage Conservation District have inquired about the availability of plaques as a continuation of the pilot project in Mount Joy/Peter Street.

**Since 2008, the cost of the plaques has risen**

Since the time of the original plaque project in 2008-2009, the cost per plaque has risen from \$350 plus tax to \$425 plus HST. Staff recommends a modest increase in the City's contribution per plaque to acknowledge the higher cost, from \$150 per plaque to \$175. The program guidelines, attached as Appendix 'A,' have been amended to reflect this change in the City's per plaque contribution, as well as removing the reference to the "Town".

**Allocation of funds from the Heritage Reserve Fund to support the continuation of the plaque program**

Allocation of funds from the City's Heritage Reserve Fund will allow the continuation of the plaque program. The administration of the program by a community group, as in the case of the Markham Village Conservancy, is advantageous as it minimizes the demand on municipal staff resources, and makes the program truly community-based.

**Heritage Markham supports the continuation of the interpretive plaque program and the use of the Heritage Reserve Fund to provide a grant**

Heritage Markham supports the continuation of the Markham Village Conservancy's interpretive plaque program (Heritage Markham Extract, January 13, 2016, Appendix 'B'). Heritage Markham supports the use of the Heritage Reserve Fund for this purpose. Based on staff's review, this project is eligible for funding within the guidelines and criteria adopted by Council in 1991, under the category of Commemorative Plaques and Signage Projects. The Heritage Reserve Fund Guidelines are attached as Appendix 'C'.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Staff recommend that Council allocate up to \$6,000 from the Heritage Reserve Fund to provide financial assistance to the Markham Village Conservancy for the continuation of the interpretive plaque program. It should be noted that Council previously approved a grant of up to \$6,000 for the interpretive plaque program (March 2, 2010); however, because the local plaque program has been "on hold" until recently due to other commitments of the Markham Village Conservancy, staff was of the opinion that the matter should be tabled at Development Services Committee and Council for a renewed approval due to the passage of five years since the original approval.

This one-time request of up to \$6,000 will be funded from the Heritage Reserve Fund (087-2800-115) which has a current balance of \$64,670. The \$6,000 funding would allow the creation of up to 34 interpretive plaques. Any funds not used as part of this program would be returned to the Heritage Reserve Fund.

**HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable

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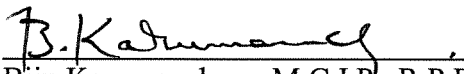
**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

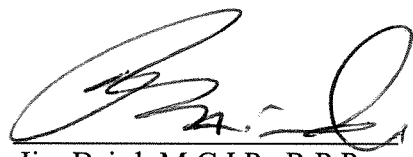
This project aligns with the City's Strategic Priorities of Managed Growth and Environment by providing an educational program about the history of the City of Markham and reinforcing the special character of the City's heritage conservation districts.

**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

This report has been reviewed by the Finance Department. Heritage Markham has provided its comments on this proposal.

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

  
Biju Karumanchery, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.  
Director of Planning & Urban Design

  
Jim Baird, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.  
Commissioner of Development Services

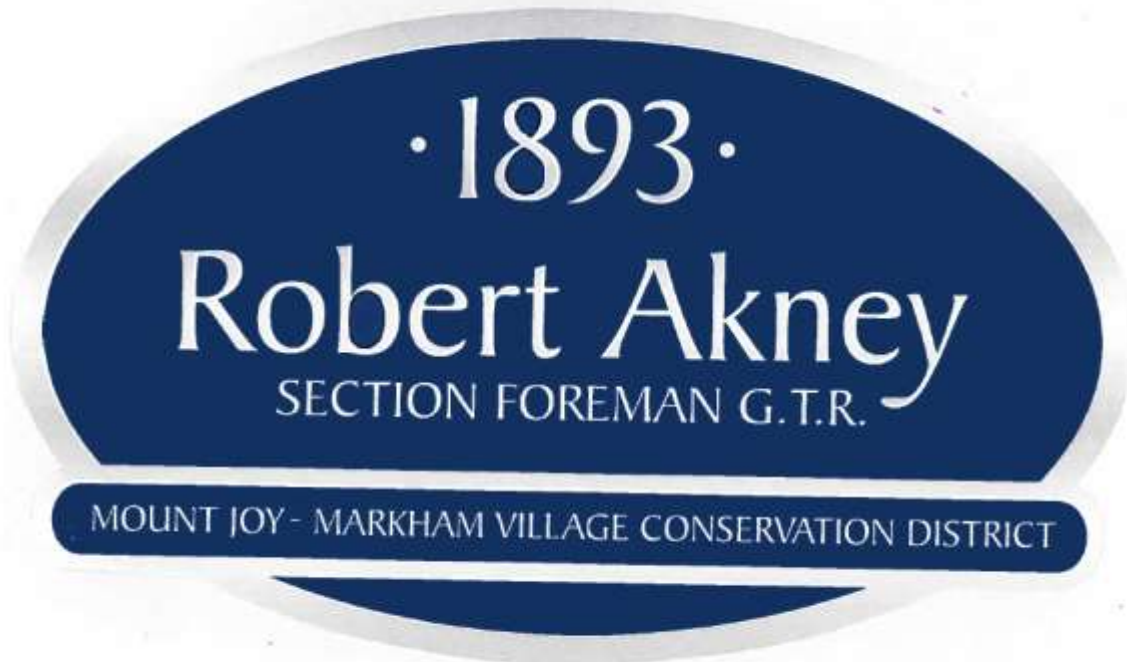
**ATTACHMENTS:**

Figure 1: Interpretive Plaque Design  
Appendix 'A': Plaque Program Guidelines  
Appendix 'B': Heritage Markham Extract January 13, 2016  
Appendix 'C': Heritage Reserve Fund Guidelines

**FILE PATH:**

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**Figure 1: Plaque Design**



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## APPENDIX 'A'

### PROGRAM GUIDELINES

#### Interpretive Plaques for Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest in Heritage Conservation Districts

##### 1. BACKGROUND

Individually designated properties throughout the City receive a round bronze plaque from the City of Markham at no charge to identify and celebrate the fact that the property is designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Property owners possessing buildings of cultural heritage value or interest in Markham's heritage conservation districts ("district designation") have indicated an interest over the years in obtaining an interpretive plaque for their properties. The purpose would be to provide basic historical material on a plaque of a standardized design and type.

##### 2. OBJECTIVE OF PROGRAM

The objective of the program is primarily educational as a means to:

- Identify the heritage resource;
- Celebrate the heritage significance of a property
- foster pride in home ownership; and
- promote cultural heritage tourism.

##### 3. PLAQUE DETAILS

The standard elements of the plaque design are as follows:  
(see attached sample illustration)

**Shape** - Oval

**Size**- 10" x 17" is standard size

**Material** - Aluminium with raised, brushed aluminium lettering with a leatherette texture background

**Colours**- Lettering to be raised, brushed aluminium, background colour to match standardized heritage conservation district approved colours unless modified by Council.

**Border** - Single line border.

**Protection** - Diamond Clear Coat to inhibit oxidation.

**Message/ Information and Font**– Text to include:

- original owner name (or significant person) [Sentence Case]
- Occupation [Upper Case]
- Date of construction [Numeric]
- Heritage District Name [Upper Case]

Text is to be centred.

**Mounting** – the plaque to be mounted on the front of the building or other prominent location.

#### **4. INSTALLATION**

All properties are designated and any alteration requires City approval (as per the Ontario Heritage Act). The City (Heritage Section) will be consulted regarding installation of the plaque.

The mounting of the plaque is the responsibility of the owner, unless otherwise specified.

#### **5. COST AND FUNDING**

Plaque Cost: \$480.25 (2016) inclusive of taxes.

Funding:	City of Markham	\$175.00
	Owner and/or Local Group	\$305.25

The City of Markham will review its contribution commitment, as needed. Any increase in the City of Markham commitment will require Council approval and amendment to this policy.

The prime source of City funding for this project will be the Heritage Reserve Fund. Council may choose to allocate additional funding to this program from other general revenue sources.

Allocation of funds to support the City of Markham component will be considered on an annual basis by Council. The City grant will be subject to the availability of funding.

Approved by Council:

Revised:

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**APPENDIX 'B'**

**HERITAGE MARKHAM  
EXTRACT**

DATE: January 18, 2016  
TO: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning

EXTRACT CONTAINING ITEM #17 OF THE FIRST HERITAGE MARKHAM  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 13, 2016.

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- 17. Plaques**  
**Interpretive Plaques for Heritage Buildings in the**  
**Markham Village Heritage Conservation District (16.11)**  
Extracts: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning
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The Senior Heritage Planner described the Interpretive Plaques program, initiated by the Markham Village Conservancy, to raise awareness of heritage buildings. The Conservancy is requesting continued support for the program. Discussions included past attempts at initiating a similar program in Thornhill, through community efforts.

Heritage Markham Recommends:

That Heritage Markham supports the use of the Heritage Reserve Fund to provide financial assistance to the Markham Village Conservancy to continue their interpretive plaque project within the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District; and,

That funding of \$175 per plaque, with up to \$6,000 being allocated to the overall project, is recommended to be provided to the Markham Village Conservancy, subject to Council approval, to reflect the higher unit cost in 2016.

CARRIED



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## APPENDIX 'C'

### Extract from Heritage Reserve Fund Guidelines

The regular maintenance of a building shall not be eligible for financial assistance from the Heritage Reserve Fund.

To be eligible for financial assistance, buildings must be considered historically and/or architecturally significant and either owned by the municipality or occupied by the municipality such as in the case of a long term lease. In the latter case, the owner would be required to enter into a heritage easement allowing the owner to retain possession and use of the property while ensuring its future preservation.

#### ii) Municipal Acquisition of Heritage Buildings

Monies from the Heritage Reserve Fund may be used by the Town to acquire buildings of architectural and/or historical significance which are threatened. For example, as a final option, a significant heritage structure threatened with demolition could be acquired by the municipality and possibly resold to a sympathetic owner with a heritage easement on the property.

All other options for the retention of significant buildings should be exhausted prior to consideration of municipal acquisition.

#### iii) Commemorative Plaques and Signage Projects

Financial assistance will be available for the production and installation of plaques commemorating important people, places and events related to the history of Markham. These plaques can help raise public awareness of and develop an appreciation for the Town's past. Historical information will be displayed on a standard Town of Markham Commemorative Plaque, the design and size of which is to be determined. Designation plaques which identify buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act will continue to be funded through the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (Heritage Markham) budget.

Heritage related signage such as boundary identification signs for Heritage Conservation Districts or signage identifying an interesting project such as an archaeological excavation can also be funded through this component of the Heritage Reserve Fund.

#### iv) Heritage Studies

Financial resources from the Heritage Reserve Fund can also be used to fund studies of a heritage nature such as heritage conservation district studies.