

# BRANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Deaccession Plan Meeting

Special Meeting of the Board

Tuesday, May 23, 2017 at 6:30

Tim Philp, Doug Summerhayes, Carolyn Purden, Esther Brower, Bill Hanna, Annette Minutillo  
Regrets: Willy Hilgendag, Michael St. Amant

Tim circulated a document prior to the meeting outlining a plan for dealing with the deaccessioning and cleanout of the museum over the next several months.

The Plan noted in its preliminary remarks that the Museum is drowning in ‘stuff’. While the Museum had previously gone through a deaccessioning exercise, we still appear to have more than 130 boxes of material that has been flagged for deaccession that have not yet been removed. We have been stalled because a ‘New Museum’ has always been just around the corner and it seemed a shame to put money into our current operation if we were going to move. However this has led to paralysis and a worsening problem. We have prime exhibit space that is unusable due to clutter and heavy material stored in an upstairs room which may be causing structural damage, or at the very least, severe stress to an aging building.

Tim Philp, Bill Hanna and Esther Brouwer met with and have reviewed various plans in concert with staff members, Nathan and Jason, and these were presented to the Board for consideration. The following Plan is proposed:

- 1)** Staff will be invited to give thought into how they want to reconfigure the display space for the museum. Each room will be gone through identifying ‘what is the purpose of this room’ and ‘what is the story that we are trying to tell with this space’?
- 2)** There **MUST** be a press strategy. There will be many who will worry we are risking our cultural heritage. It is vital that we speak with one voice to the membership and to the public, with a communication plan that will explain what we are doing and the reasons for it. Staff have been given strict instructions to direct all questions or concerns to Tim.

Tim intends to tell the membership immediately (Wednesday afternoon) through the newsletter.

Tim has already escorted Michael Allan with The Expositor through the building, highlighting the problem, and taking photographs to show its magnitude. Once the Expositor article has been published, we will issue a press release to the entire media (Brant News, CKPC, Tekla etc).

- 3)** The museum will be closed to the public from May 29<sup>th</sup> until the project is completed. This could be three months or perhaps even longer, but we are fortunate that the summer is a quiet time for programming and visitation. But even if this goes longer the effect on the Museum will be minimal. There should not be any issue with funding/grants as this is simply closing the museum to the public as part of a maintenance schedule, not closing down operations. This is necessary because we do not have the staff to deal with the deaccessioning process while keeping the museum open. It was suggested that any Signage on the doors should be done professionally.

- 4) Nothing in this plan will affect the operations at Myrtleville. Myrtleville will continue to offer a full slate of programs, and the Fathers of Confederation Picnic, Walking Tours, Speaker's Events and Member's Picnic will remain on the BHS schedule.
- 5) We will utilize full-time staff to do the work and all but two of the approved co-op students. Two of the students will be working with Sarah at Myrtleville for the summer. Esther will be here as much as possible, around her work schedule.

The cleanout will start at the mall location. There are many boxes over there that have been slated for deaccessioning. Staff will start by checking the paperwork to ensure we have a record of what is there and will then decide on the disposal method.

- 6) It was noted that the Inventory Project established what artefacts are being held and earmarked items that should be deaccessioned. And there are more items that should be deaccessioned and will be added to the list. Esther will identify whether we are required to have another 'outside' person on our Deaccessioning Committee going forward.

It was clarified that artefacts that are donated become the property of the museum and the museum can do with them as they wish - the Board acknowledged that there may be things that donors would like to have back, although this may be impossible to accommodate.

There will basically be several methods of disposing of unwanted artifacts.

- Offering to other cultural and heritage institutions
  - Offering items for sale to the public of items with some value - could this be done at the mall location so as not interfere with the museum operations?
  - Scrap metal dealers
  - Costume shops
  - Theatre companies
  - A large dumpster
- 7) When the mall location has been cleaned out, that space can be used for temporary storage of items that we do not have room for, but that we are going to keep. Further, there is a great deal of display shelves, cabinets, and cases that we should keep for the present.
  - 8) We then start on the museum building itself, beginning with the large exhibit space to give us room to stage material for consideration for deaccession. As each room is cleared out, we will take the opportunity to do a thorough cleaning of the room and any minor repairs/painting that is necessary. Repairs may be significant and may require some expense. It was suggested that we look also at the front doors and front entry way.
  - 9) Staff/administration space will be moved to the back rooms that are now used as offices for the bookkeeper, to free up prime display rooms at the front of the museum. The kitchen and washroom facilities will be tidied and turned into usable space.
  - 10) Finally the archives will be addressed with a good look at how these records are stored and how they are accessed.

It would be great if we could energize our membership to come out and help with some of the work such as painting and cleaning. It would certainly give them an opportunity to show their support for the museum and they would gain a better understanding of the problems the Museum faces. It would also give them a sense of ownership and accomplishment.

As we get closer to opening again, we should plan a Grand Opening Party to invite the public into the 'new' museum to see what we have done. We can have displays that show the before and after pictures of selected areas as well as showing the work in progress. This would make a good feature article as we come close to opening day. This is an opportunity to start to get the NEW museum in front of the public and to start getting the attention of the community that we are not the same old place we were for 50 years. It was suggested that we find a sponsor for this event.

**Moved by Doug Summerhayes and seconded by Bill Hanna that the BHS Board of Directors approve this Plan in principle, and that the Executive Director Pro Tempore be instructed to carry it out.**

**Carried Unanimously**

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.