

**City of Oshawa Integrated Columbus Part II Planning Act and Municipal Class
Environmental Assessment Act Study**

Columbus Community Advisory Committee (C.A.C.) Meeting Minutes

Date: April 26, 2022 (6:30 pm – 8:30 pm)

Location: Columbus Community Centre, 3265 Simcoe Street North, Oshawa, ON

Attendees:

Laura Moebs, City of Oshawa
Connor Leherbauer, City of Oshawa
Councillor John Neal, City of Oshawa
Liz Anderson, Member
Arlene Feeney, Member

Regrets:

Darryl Koster, Member
Philippe Coutu, Member

Matters Discussed

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Laura Moebs welcomed members to the Columbus C.A.C. meeting and attendees introduced themselves.
- Laura Moebs provided an update on the Committee vacancy, and indicated that a new member should be selected by the Development Services Committee and Council in May.

2. Presentation: Columbus Heritage Conservation District Investigation

- Connor Leherbauer presented information on the Columbus Heritage Conservation District Investigation.
- Connor Leherbauer advised that he was also part of the South Field Heritage Conservation District process.

3. Questions, Comments and Discussion

- A member asked about existing individual heritage designations and whether or not they would be impacted by a Heritage Conservation District (H.C.D.) designation. Staff clarified that an H.C.D. designation would be another layer of designation and would not negate a property's individual designation.

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However, the Heritage Conservation District attributes would take precedent over the heritage attributes of individual properties. Staff noted that this does not include interior heritage attributes, which can only be protected in a Part IV designation, not a Part V H.C.D. designation. Staff also clarified that an H.C.D. by-law is registered on title for all of the properties located within an H.C.D. If someone were to sell their home and lived within an H.C.D., the designation would transfer to the new owner.

- A member asked for clarification regarding how an H.C.D. process would align with the existing Columbus Part II Planning Study process, and whether or not an H.C.D. would still permit development of commercial properties (e.g. small shops). Staff clarified that an H.C.D. is not meant to halt development completely and rather, development could provide opportunities for growth that would complement the existing area. Staff noted that the Part II Planning process is a separate process from an H.C.D. Study and both processes would carry on their own timelines. Staff noted that they anticipate reporting back on the results of the H.C.D. investigation on June 6th to the Development Services Committee and Council.
- A member noted that Columbus residents are not okay with a massive loss of green space, flora and fauna, existing vistas, etc.
- A member noted that there was interest in an H.C.D. Study for Columbus years ago, but it did not carry forward.
- A member noted that they support the investigation of an H.C.D. in Columbus and that this process is long overdue.
- Staff clarified the process of an H.C.D. investigation and potential future Study, and noted that 18 months is a realistic timeline to actually implement an H.C.D. Study, Plan and by-law.
- Staff noted that every property owner within a proposed H.C.D. does not necessarily have to agree to the H.C.D. designation or provide feedback on the Study. Staff will try to get as much feedback as possible from the community but ultimately, the decision to designate an area as an H.C.D. is up to the Development Services Committee and Council.
- A member noted that better communication is needed from the City to Columbus residents. Most residents do not get the local newspaper and many do not visit the City website. Information via mail is the preferred method of communication as it reaches all property owners. It was also suggested that future notices include wording that asks property owners to share the information with their tenants, if applicable.
- Staff noted that an H.C.D. Study process is not required to be solely staff-led. It is critically important that the community participates in the process.

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- A member asked how an H.C.D. designation affects property values. Staff advised that studies have shown that property values do not decrease with an H.C.D. designation. As well, communities have found that there is a certain sense of security that comes from living within an H.C.D., as one knows what to expect and future development will be compatible with the existing buildings (i.e. there is a level of civic control).
- Staff noted that property owners are mainly concerned about what they can or cannot do with their property within an H.C.D. However, for many property owners living within an H.C.D., the designation can feel like protection, rather than a restriction.
- Staff noted that it's part of the H.C.D. Study process to determine how to implement the H.C.D. guidelines.
- There was a discussion regarding financial incentive programs related to heritage properties. Staff advised that the City offers a Heritage Property Tax Reduction Program which reduces City and education property tax by 40 percent on eligible heritage properties.
- There was a discussion on the role of Heritage Oshawa and who the members are. It was noted that they are volunteers and not heritage consultants. Heritage Oshawa is advisory to Council and gives staff and Council a resource to rely on.
- A member asked if there are any downsides to designating an H.C.D. Staff noted that it's hard to predict what the feedback of the community will be. Generally, the main concern from residents is they do not want to be restricted in what they can do with their properties. However, it is important to educate the community and let them know that an H.C.D. provides residents with an opportunity to protect their properties, rather than be restricted.
- Staff noted that it is standard practice to look at best practices and see how other H.C.D.s have been designated. There is also an opportunity to provide different rules for different properties within an H.C.D. (e.g. non-contributing properties may have more lenient rules compared to defined properties). An H.C.D. can have multiple levels of protection/property status.

4. Next Steps

- Connor Leherbauer advised that comments on the Columbus H.C.D. investigation are requested by May 16th and that if members have additional questions, they can contact him via email at cleherbauer@oshawa.ca or telephone at (905) 436-3311 ext. 2402.
- Laura Moebs advised that meeting minutes will be circulated for review and once finalized, posted on the Study website.