

# Were we at the same Castleton Town Hall meeting?

COLBORNE CHRONICLE  
To The Editor:

Re: Castleton Town Hall

MAY 4/06

Were we at the same meeting April 20? There are quite a few errors in the reporting of the April 20 meeting and about the Parks & Recreation (P&R) subcommittee and Heritage Cramahe.

The meeting was held in the Castleton Town Hall because that's where the P&R subcommittee meets — as do several other groups such as the Cemetery Board, Northern Stewardship, Castleton Sports Club, etc. "The committee wanted people to see what had been done to the hall prior to the committee putting a stop order on the project" is false. There was and is no such thing as a "stop order". (Not sure where that came from except to fan the flames, yet again.) It was hoped from the January 13 meeting between Heritage, P&R and P&R subcommittee that Heritage would postpone any work until Phillip Carter had a chance to view the hall and a plan was developed.

Felicity Sidnell-Reid read a letter from a member of Heritage Cramahe encouraging the formation of the Friends of Castleton Town Hall to inspire public interest and involvement. Another letter from Heritage chair Reg Webb stated they would support the project in principle if the subcommittee kept to the Heritage Act and municipal bylaw.

Heritage Cramahe's mandate, as told to me at their March 20 meeting, is to restore the designated areas only (front entrance and hall) which require the removal of the

kitchen and, most likely, the washrooms. Heritage Cramahe is not interested in whether these are replaced. It was suggested the washrooms and kitchen be installed in the basement as the lower level is not designated. Unfortunately, this does not address the elements required by user groups, which is what the P&R subcommittee is investigating. This does not "cross" council's and Heritage Cramahe's purposes; rather, it complements and provides a broader perspective.

When informed the building was not usable and pieces of the ceiling were falling down, Heritage Cramahe told me the contractor hired to remove the panelling and ceiling (for exploratory purposes) would be asked to put up a temporary plastic ceiling barrier and the hall would be professionally cleaned as soon as possible. Pam Buttery is quoted as saying the "reason it isn't usable now is because they had to stop the work", but at the Heritage meeting I attended (March 20), a restoration contractor had yet to be hired.

Roseanne Quinn and Brian Buttery (members of Heritage Cramahe) have each attended separate subcommittee meetings I also attended. All P&R subcommittee minutes and e-mails have been sent to Heritage Cramahe members.

Heritage Cramahe's absence from the April 20 meeting was noticeable. Which is why, when asked "Who was directly responsible for allowing work to commence?", there was no one there who could provide a

thorough answer unless finger-pointing was expected. There were, however, three council members in attendance who must have approved the first "step" before it was carried out. Perhaps they should have responded instead of Ms Buttery "defending" the committee her husband sits on.

Ms. Sidnell-Reid gave the background information on the \$40,000 set aside in 1999 for a Millennium Project which, unfortunately, was unable to get further grant funding as the plans put forward required (she was also a member of the Heritage Committee in 2002 when another restoration effort was made). She also openly disclosed Mr. Carter's council-approved payment — \$10,000 to produce a feasibility study, plus a tax receipt for another \$10,000.

The suggestion of an approximate budget of \$100,000 to get the first phase going (once developed) was erroneously attributed to Mr. Carter. He said, this way, we'd only have to fundraise approximately \$50,000 and use the remainder of the \$40,000 from the 1999 plan. Mr. Carter did say a first phase could include "interior plastering, wheelchair ramp provisions, lighting replacement and whatever else is required to make the space usable", but a monetary amount was not mentioned.

Cramahe Township Mayor Lee Dekeyser recommended the purchase of 30 feet on the west side — not the south, as it was clearly stated that the south area holds the septic tank and bed and can't be built upon.

As for the \$1.5-million that keeps being

thrown around — forget about it! Not one person supports or approves this "fanciful" figure.

These meetings are open to all, as I discovered upon first reading about the restoration in a February issue of the Northumberland Weekly. I e-mailed the municipality and, from that, received invitations to attend both committee meetings, which I have done. It doesn't take a rocket scientist or even a restoration architect to figure out how to get involved. Hint: Heritage meets the third Monday of the month at the Colborne Library.

This meeting was set up specifically to allow Mr. Carter to get community input, promote discussion and introduce the Friends of Castleton Town Hall Association. While it's easy to get sidetracked with the blame game, we still find ourselves with this current situation. We need to work together towards restoring the glory and functionality to the centre of our community — with a realistic and economical approach.

The meeting definitely raised people's interest and created dialogue which, hopefully, inspired those present to contribute their time, efforts and opinions at future meetings. So, if you want to participate and provide user input, stay tuned for further information on the first annual general meeting of the Friends of Castleton Town Hall being held 7:30 p.m. May 25 at — where else? — the Castleton Town Hall.

Karen Nicol / Castleton

## The Colborne Chronicle



Bob Owen  
Editor



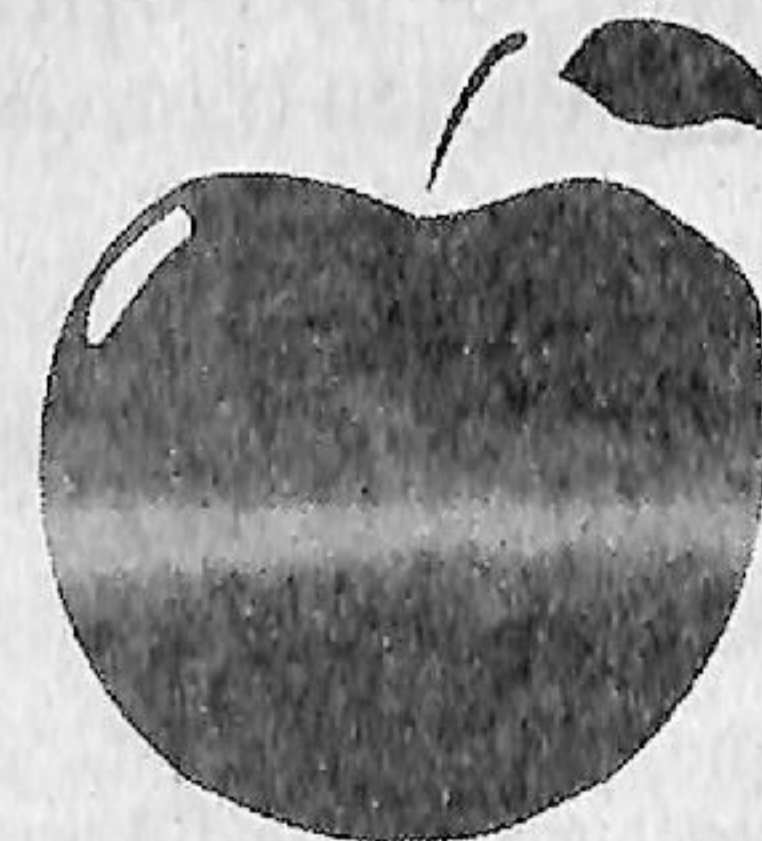
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