

Fallbrook Farm to receive a heritage designation

By Frances Niblock

Town councillors intend to proceed with application for a heritage designation for Fallbrook Farm near Ballinafad, but the fate of the McClure log cabin, mill site and bridge remain unclear as no group has forcefully come forward to “champion” a preservation/restoration project.

The property – described as a “national treasure” by one councillor – is owned by Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) which is not in the built heritage business and has repeatedly stressed that it will not help financially with any plans for the site.

For several years a group known as the Friends of Fallbrook have worked to try to save the property – it is currently boarded up to stop repeated vandalism – but the group has not provided an acceptable business plan, and it has not incorporated, which would allow it to raise charitable donations.

In a report recommending a heritage designation, Heritage Halton Hills said the McClure cabin – made from red pine and built

in 1856 – is one of the few remaining structures of its kind left today. It is currently covered with siding and has several additions, which have no heritage or design interest.

The report said the value of the property is the entire pioneer site that includes the cabin, mill and bridge and that Fallbrook Farm has the potential to demonstrate the evolution of an example of the community’s first industrial complex.

Friends member Ann McIntyre of Acton, said the site could go from “derelict to profitable” and that she’d like to see some First Nations references at the site. Another member suggested it could be the next Black Creek Village.

McIntyre noted the group had spent over \$20,000 to date on research studies – including an extensive oral history, but several councillors repeatedly suggested that the Friends aren’t “hearing” CVC’s position that it will not provide any cash.

Regional/Town Councillor Jane Fogal, who supported the heritage designation, suggested

that the group should ask CVC for a lease and then hire a grant writer to try to get funding from other levels of government.

Georgetown rural Councillor Joan Robson, a member of the CVC Board, said the site is deteriorating and is boarded up as a security risk. She said the heritage designation request was “premature” and that they were going through the motions that no one can afford.



A HAPPY WINNER: Mavis Dance holds a beautiful water colour painting kindly donated by Acton Maria Sallay (left.) Sallay drew the winning ticket at the recent Acton Seniors’s Christmas Dinner. – Julie Conroy photo



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