

Minutes of May 10, 2016  
Palmerston Railway Heritage Museum Information Meeting  
Palmerston Library Community Room 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor George Bridge, Councillor Mary Lou Colwell, Chad Martin (via Skype), Tyler Prins, Delanie Toner, Bob McEachern, Susan Welsh, Lou Logan, Reg Dineen, Curly Wright, Shirley Wright, Peyton O'Brien, Wayne Martin, Heather Watterworth, Andrew Gowan, Mark Robinson, Recreation Facilities Manager Al Carr & Manager of Economic Development Belinda Wick-Graham.

Mayor George Bridge opened the meeting at 6:34 pm and welcomed those in attendance. Roundtable introductions were made.

Mayor Bridge explained that the Palmerston Railway Heritage Museum is a treasure within Palmerston and the Town of Minto. The Town of Minto has invested a lot of money into the Museum and Park. Mayor Bridge thanked Bob McEachern, the Palmerston Lions and the many other volunteers who have put time, money and energy into the rehabilitation of the Museum and Park.

Mayor Bridge explained that the Wellington County Museum & Archives has hired a Community Outreach person that has been tasked with assisting heritage groups within the County. As a result Mayor Bridge reached out to Janice Hindley, Administrator with the Wellington County Museum & Archives. Ms. Hindley came up to the Palmerston Railway Museum on March 29, 2016 and met with Bob McEachern and Mayor Bridge to discuss future plans for the station, outbuildings and park. A detailed report was prepared by Ms. Hindley and distributed to those in attendance. A copy of the report is attached as "Schedule A"

Wick-Graham reported that in May 2015 a group of economic development professionals taking part in the University of Waterloo Economic Developers Association of Canada accreditation course visited the Palmerston Railway Heritage Museum and provided a report back on their first impressions and suggestions for moving forward. A copy of this presentation is attached as "Schedule B".

Mayor Bridge highlighted that a Steering Committee of six people would be formed to move the plan forward. This Committee would be a sub-committee of the Town of Minto Cultural Roundtable. This Committee would be responsible for developing a terms of reference and establishing an operational structure and action plan. The Steering Committee will also be looking at a bus trip to other railway museums.

Bob McEachern expressed concern that items have been given to the museum and people trusted him to keep the items in the community. He was concerned that a lot of people might be upset if the items are stored in Elora. Mayor Bridge noted that the County Museum and Archives staff can assist us with cataloging the items and store them in a proper air controlled facility. That the Railway Museum would still own them and we would be able to circulate items into and out of the Railway Museum to keep the displays new and interesting. Chad Martin highlighted that moving forward the Railway Museum should have a Collections Management Policy as well as a Donor Form. Ms. Hindley has already supplied us with a Donor Form that could be used. Delanie Toner asked if the items could be stored upstairs and those in attendance

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wondered if the Library shelving that was used downtown for the temporary location could be moved over to the Museum. Chad offered to assist with designing a layout and storage options.

Andrew Gowan suggested that our collections could be put out on loan to other museums and act as a rolling museum, which would spread the word about Palmerston's Railway history and Museum. Andrew believes that our goal with the Museum should be to attract tourists to the community.

Bob McEachern thought a model railway display would be a great addition to attract people.

Mayor Bridge highlighted that culture and recreation grants would be coming forward and we need to be prepared to apply for them. He also believes we can host a variety of events and programs at the Museum that would also raise money for the Museum.

Everyone in attendance agreed that we have a short amount of time before the plowing match to get the museum into shape and action needs to happen immediately. Mayor Bridge and Council will be appointing the Steering Committee at the May 17, 2016 Council meeting.

Adjournment at 7:35 pm

Steering Committee Meeting: May 24, 2016 at 6:30 pm at the Palmerston Library Community Room

Belinda Wick-Graham  
Manager of Economic Development

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Schedule A

PALMERSON RAILWAY STATION REPORT

On March 29, 2016, staff from the Wellington County Museum and Archives were invited to tour the railway station and meet with Warden George Bridge and Bob McEachern to discuss future plans for the station, outbuildings, and the park. WCMA staff was asked for their advice and assistance to move forward and meet the objectives for the station as set by the Town.

In our opinion, the station, boxcars, crew building and surrounding park are wonderful treasures that hold unlimited potential in terms of cultural tourism and recreation for not only the Town but for the County. The railway station houses a tremendous collection of archival material (paper, photographs, microfilm, books) and artifacts (objects) not only related to the railway but to a wide variety of subjects connected to Palmerston's history, as well as Minto's and the County's history. We believe that to develop the station, its outbuildings and boxcars to their full potential would be a three to five year process. The WCMA is available to **assist** with advice, expertise, sharing resources, designing space and programmes, and letters of support for grant applications that the Town may submit.

This report contains staff suggestions based on our visit to the Palmerston Railway Museum.

**Stage 1: 2016: Objective**

- Open the three main rooms (ladies' waiting room, main waiting room, telegraph room) as an operating museum showcasing Palmerston and Wellington County railway history circa 1920s (date has not been determined yet) for September 2016 so that tours from the IPM can come through and experience the heritage site.

**Issues to be addressed in Stage 1**

- **Clear the space in the main waiting room of all items** including the five large display cases; the vertical and lateral file cases; framed art and prints on the walls; gift shop items; the large artifact on the floor; the slanted oak desk from the post office; tables and chairs; etc. Everything needs to be cleared out and stored and then selected items will be returned based on the design plan.
- Prepare a visual design of the interpretive areas showing where the stove, chairs, benches, trunks, suitcase, display cases, baggage carts, etc. would be placed for best traffic flow. It is critical that the interpretive plan be focused and clearly defined.
- TV monitors featuring looped DVDs are an excellent way to show scanned images of photos, documents, movies, artifacts strictly relating to the railway.
- Sounds of the train whistle and the conductors calling out "all aboard" or other announcements can be set with a motion sensor.
- Obtain quotes to replicate the bench in the main waiting room and the bench seating in the ladies' waiting room.
- Electric baseboard heaters in waiting rooms should at least be painted out in a colour that blends into the walls.

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- Remove the window blinds from the waiting rooms.
- Source mannequins and clothing
- Create a dedicated gift shop area.
- Consolidate all research material into the research/genealogy room.
- Identify from inventory which relevant artifacts will be displayed. It is important that non-railway material is cleared out of the rooms and that the focus is kept very narrow.
- **Clear out the space in the telegraph room** including the removal of the “modern” table and chairs. Develop a visual design for the space and determine which artifacts are relevant to that room and will be displayed based on what that room is interpreting ie. telegraph office, ticket sales.
- Inventory artifacts from the three rooms that will be on display.

**Stage 2: 2017/2018: Objectives**

Objective 1: Develop a dedicated research room in the existing computer room

Issues to be addressed:

- **Clear the space** of all unused, obsolete equipment.
- Inventory, store and possibly transfer archival material to the WCMA with copies provided to Minto for the research room.
- Digitize relevant collections, starting with railway history material, with the goal of making the railway collection available online. Collections on other subjects should not take priority until the railway collection has been digitized first.
- Determine the purpose and scope of the research room. Will it contain or provide access to railway history, Minto history, property history, genealogy? The design of the room will come from the stated purpose and scope.
- Temperature and humidity controls required if original archival material is stored in this room ( ie. newspapers, books, photographs, microfilm, etc.)
- Prepare a visual design for the space based on the purpose and scope. Appropriate shelving, work tables and chairs need to be sourced.

Objective 2: Determine Operating Framework

Issues to be addressed:

- Determine whether or not the Railway Station will operate seasonally (ie. May through October like the WCMA's Barn); the weekly hours of operation or will it be weekend only, and admission (ie. admission by donation and set fees for special events/programmes?)
- Funding sources
- Staffing levels/Governance ie. committee
- Partnerships
- Collection policy and procedures for donations

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- Consider a Business Plan

Objective 3: Develop public and school programming

Issues to be addressed:

- Which schools are attending now and what is provided to them?
- Develop curriculum based school programmes for elementary and high schools
- Set admission fee for school programmes
- The railway station and park hold tremendous potential for family/public programmes. Special Railway weekends/festival, scavenger hunts, morse code demonstrations, handcar races, guest speakers, costumed interpreters for special days, hands-on activities, music, downtown walking tours, etc. Consider what other area railway museums provide and adapt great ideas to the Palmerston site (Doon Heritage Village, Markham, St.Thomas, etc.)

Objective 4: Develop the Cook Car, Box Car and Crew Station into public sites with exhibits and activities connected to those offered at the Main Station

Issues to be addressed:

- Clear the Crew Station space of all items, and store or transfer non-railway artifacts and material.
- Inventory railway artifacts and material into the collection database.
- Determine a visual plan for the space.
- Select relevant artifacts for display based on the interpretive purpose of the space.
- Determine how the Box Car and Cook Car will be used.
- Accessibility into the Cars.

Thank you for the opportunity to tour the Palmerston Railway Museum and Park, and we look forward to assisting you with this project.



Janice Hindley  
Administrator, Wellington Place, Museum and Archives

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Schedule B