

HERITAGE COMMITTEE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Loyalist Township Heritage Committee?

Our inheritance of architecture, cultural landscapes, and material culture is an irreplaceable asset and resource. In Ontario, local municipalities have an important role in the conservation of our wealth of historically and architecturally significant properties.

The Ontario Heritage Act provides the framework within which municipalities can act to ensure the conservation of properties of historical and/or architectural significance. It also encourages citizen participation in heritage conservation locally. Under section 28 of the Act, the Council of a municipality is authorized to establish, by by-law, a Heritage Committee, which consists of five or more people. The function of the Committee is to advise Council on local heritage matters and to assist the Council in carrying out its heritage conservation program.

Though the organization and function of heritage advisory committees may be defined by the Act, municipalities are not required to establish a Heritage Committee. The initiative to start the process of forming a Heritage Committee can come from many sources. A heritage homeowner, a community group or organization may initiate the process. However, it is the municipal Council, which finally establishes the Committee, determines its terms of reference, and appoints its members.

What does the Loyalist Township Heritage Committee do?

When the Heritage Committee is established, it becomes a standing committee of Council and an integral part of the municipal structure. The Committee functions under the Council and normally reports directly to council or through another standing Committee. Briefly, these are some of the ways in which the Heritage Committee can assist a municipal council: examining all the properties and areas that may deserve protection now or in the future; facilitating the community's interest and involvement in heritage conservation through a recognized forum; promoting heritage conservation within the community; advising property owners on appropriate conservation and maintenance practices; determining the value of heritage resources for protection through designation; providing Council with reliable advice to assist them in making decisions on complex issues; administering designated property grant programs; educating the community to encourage a conservation ethic and a climate of responsible stewardship of the community's heritage assets.

What are the benefits of heritage designation?

If your property meets one or more of the listed criteria, it may qualify for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Designated property owners are eligible to apply for grant money, ½ of eligible costs up to \$7,000.00, under the Designated Property Grant Program. Through the grant program, an owner may receive one grant per calendar year for work done on the heritage elements of the designated property. To qualify for grant money, a project must be directed toward the conservation and/ or restoration of the elements of the property given in the reasons for designation.

The Township has also established a Heritage Property Tax Refund Program for properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. The program provides for a 40% reduction in the local municipal, county and education portion of the tax bill. Only properties that have a registered heritage easement or enter into an agreement regarding preservation and maintenance of the property qualify.

For more information on the Designated Property Grant Program and the Heritage Property Tax Refund Program, please contact Andrea Furniss at (613) 386-7351 ext. 144 or afurniss@loyalist.ca

Once a property has been designated under Part IV or V of the Ontario Heritage Act, it allows Township Council to control alterations, demolition or removal of buildings to some extent. Township Council, through the Loyalist Township Heritage Committee, offers assistance and suggestions when alterations or renovations are to be carried out. When the homeowner intends to make alterations to a designated property, they are advised to consult with the Heritage Committee to ensure that the alterations will enhance the heritage features of the property. Council, through the Loyalist Township Heritage Committee representation, may then offer suggestions and assistance where required, to ensure that the restoration complies with the reasons for designation. Designation of a property does not put any obligation on an owner to repair or maintain their property. There are restrictions on how a building may be altered, but no obligation to incur expenses for upkeep or restoration.