



October 1, 2025

Mr. Kevin Gibbs, Director
Heritage Services, City of Kingston
216 Ontario St.
Kingston, ON K7L 2Z3

Re: Report No. HP-25-024 Heritage Designation Incentives

Dear Kevin,

At our Frontenac Heritage Foundation board meeting of September 29, our group had a good discussion on the options presented regarding Heritage Designation Incentives in Staff Report HP-25-024.

First, we very much appreciate staff bringing this discussion to the Heritage Properties Committee – it is an important topic that we hope will inform future protection of not only the ten remaining listed properties outside the Urban Boundary, but also future work by the department in protecting numerous other properties in the built-up portion of the city which are deserving of heritage protection.

The premise of the staff report references the ‘hardening’ of the insurance business. This week, we were again in touch with Bruce Caughey of the Amherst Island Mutual Insurance Company; he has been in correspondence with the President of the Mutual Insurance companies, and they are quite puzzled by the situation in the Kingston area, i.e. the ‘hardening’ of the insurance companies. Bruce is quite emphatic about being willing to insure farms which have heritage designations. It is simply not an issue in his opinion. The Frontenac Heritage Foundation has sympathy with the vagaries of the unpredictable weather and other impacts of climate change but are of the opinion that the incentive program should not treat rural properties differently.

In addition, the ten remaining properties outside the Urban Boundary are situated across several land use designations - in the Prime Agricultural area, the Rural area, and in a Hamlet, so there would not be consistent or fair treatment of non-urban properties.

In terms of incentives noted in the report, we feel that the City should consider supporting the existing Heritage Grant program in a more fulsome way. The money allocated to the program has been untouched for many years and would benefit from a significant increase, and then an annual increase due to inflation.

Much of the work that qualifies for the Heritage Grant program (which now has a maximum of 50% up to a maximum \$5,000 per year) is a very small proportion of the total cost of most alterations such as a new roof, a new chimney, or new windows. The board strongly supports the idea of increasing the overall amount of the grant program which now sits at \$100,000, and we also support increasing the eligible amount (more than \$5,000). This is a more equitable treatment for all those who own heritage designated properties. The fact that all the grant funds are allocated in total each year (for example to a total of 22 recipients in 2024) is an indication that the program works effectively and is known to heritage property owners.

The City might also consider allowing more landowners to take advantage of the Property Tax Refund program, but as this requires an easement on each property, this mechanism is not as straightforward to implement. Keeping the existing Heritage Grant program is the simplest mechanism as encouragement for proactive heritage designations.

We would be pleased to discuss these ideas with you further. Again, many thanks for bringing this important issue to the Committee.

Regards,

Original signed by K. Hebert, President

cc: J. Konrad, Manager, Heritage Services
Members of Heritage Properties Committee
Bruce Caughey, Amherst Island Mutual Insurance Company