



Save Heritage Sandbanks Homes

DIALOGUE VERSUS DEMOLITION:

COUNTY HERITAGE GROUP SEEKS MEETING WITH PARK OFFICIALS BEFORE DEMOLITION OF HERITAGE HOMES

Picton, ON – A Prince Edward County group trying to preserve two historic homes at the Sandbanks Provincial Park is once again urging park officials to meet with the community and municipal officials to delay the imminent demolition of the buildings. **This time the request is through a legal letter from the group’s lawyer, Eric Gillespie of Toronto (attached).**

In recent months, Save Heritage Sandbanks Homes (SHSH) has asked repeatedly for a dialogue with park and ministry officials before demolition of the Hyatt and MacDonald homes on the park property. This week the organization was informed by Assistant Deputy Minister Chloe Stuart for Ontario’s Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks that **park officials are “moving forward with the demolition.”** In response, the group’s legal letter states:

“We write today to respectfully request that demolition of the subject properties not take place until our clients have had the opportunity to provide additional information in response to this correspondence. In summary, there are significant concerns regarding some of the matters addressed therein ... Respecting that such information must be credible, we will be providing it in the form of a legal proceeding with supporting evidence.”

The group understands that the Mayor and local Council received a letter from the Ministry with a similar message about the impending demolition. Both SHSH and local municipal officials have strongly urged the Ministry to pause demolition and to explore alternative plans for the two sites including their re-imagining as accommodation, restaurants, cafes, exhibit space and interpretive centres through partnerships with the community and private sector.

“We are deeply disappointed by the park’s decision to proceed with demolition despite the wishes of the community and our local government,” says SHSH spokesperson Liz Driver. “Our group was founded to bring all the parties together in a collaborative process. Instead, the park administration has remained committed to demolition following a badly flawed process that has **never included direct public discussions with this community** - and it has ignored these views when they have been presented.”

Media Release – September 3, 2021

Liz Driver further comments, “Sandbanks Provincial Park is not a wilderness park; it is nestled within our community and was originally created by displacing residents and businesses. The decision will contribute further to the poor relationship that already exists between the park and residents.”

Driver adds, “The Ministry arguments that the buildings are unsafe and beyond restoration have been refuted by a professional heritage architect; and the park’s own studies indicated the homes had significant historical value as a landmark property or for providing context for visitors to understand the recreational (tourism) history, created by Prince Edward County’s early entrepreneurs.”

SHSH believes the two heritage properties can be restored to meet a wide range of visitor and resident needs, and notes the park’s successful restoration of Maplerest Heritage House, a rental property with a lengthy waiting list for reservations. Finally, Liz Driver says there is interest within the private sector to develop and operate the two sites if the Ministry would launch a request for proposals – something that it has been inexplicably reluctant to do.

“This is a missed opportunity here to explore opportunities within the Ministry’s new \$6 million initiative announced in May to encourage community and private sector partnerships,” Driver says. **“The demolition undermines other efforts in our County to restore rather than destroy our special spaces, and to improve communications between the park and residents. This is truly tragic.”**

Attachment: Letter from Eric Gillespie, Eric K. Gillespie Professional Corporation, Toronto, to Minister David Piccini, September 3, 2021

For further information, a video, and images, visit the website
<https://saveheritagesandbankshomes.com/>

Or contact:
heritagesandbankshomes@gmail.com

or spokesperson, Liz Driver: liz.driver@sympatico.ca

Cell: 647 – 526 – 4877

ERIC K. GILLESPIE, LL.B.
Telephone No.: (416) 703-4047
Direct Line: (416) 703-6362
Facsimile No.: (416) 907-9147
Email: egillespie@gillespielaw.ca

September 3, 2021

SENT VIA EMAIL

David Piccini
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3
minister.mecp@ontario.ca/david.piccini@pc.ola.org

Dear Mr. Minister,

Re: Hyatt House and MacDonald House - Sandbanks Provincial Park

We are the solicitors for Save Heritage Sandbanks Homes. We have received correspondence from Chloe Stuart of your Ministry dated August 31, 2021, and are aware of similar correspondence to Prince Edward County regarding the above-noted matter dated September 2, 2021.

We write today to respectfully request that demolition of the subject properties not take place until our clients have had the opportunity to provide additional information in response to this correspondence. In summary, there are significant concerns regarding some of the matters addressed therein. Our clients hope to address these matters in a submission to you on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. It is our understanding that once this additional information is considered it can and may change the outcome in this matter.

Respecting that such information must be credible, we will be providing it in the form of a legal proceeding with supporting evidence. At the same time, our clients would be very pleased to discuss the matter prior to formally filing their materials in court.

In the interim, given your openness to dialogue regarding these issues, the intention of our clients to proceed with legal action (if necessary), the desire to have further communication prior to the demolition of the buildings (which would be an irrevocable step), and the short length of the requested deferral of demolition i.e. until Tuesday September 7th, we are hopeful that you will agree to not proceed with demolition until at least that time.

If we could receive a response to this communication as soon as possible it would be greatly appreciated. Should you have any other questions or concerns please advise.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of these matters.

Yours truly,

**ERIC K. GILLESPIE
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION**



Eric Gillespie
EKG/sq

cc. Tory Pearson, tory.pearson@ontario.ca
Chloe Stuart, chloe.stuart@ontario.ca