

Contact us

719 Queen St., Kincardine, ON, N2Z 1Z9
 Telephone: 519-396-2963 Fax: 519-396-6865
 Web site: www.kincardineneews.com
 Editorial e-mail: kincardineneews@bowesnet.com
 Advertising e-mail:
 kincardineadvertising@bowesnet.com

Editorial

Lighthouse issue a bit out of hand

The Kincardine Lighthouse is an icon in the community, but those who are raising a stink about the vinyl shingles are taking it a bit too far.

As the members of council has said, they meant no harm when they passed the renovations for the lighthouse, not thinking too much that state-of-the-art siding would be such an insult to some in the community.

But the presentation to council using terms like 'desecration' and 'Malkavian destruction', adds a tad too much melodrama to an issue that is dear to everyone's heart.

Councillors admitted to jumping the gun on making a decision and not consulting Heritage Kincardine, so the parties involved should have restrained their comments until they made their presentation and heard council's view of it.

Yes council back-pedaled, as the shingles aren't in the best taste of the heritage community. But to tear them off now and start fresh would be a foolish waste of taxpayer's money.

A mistake was made, apologies have been given. It's good to see the issue is going to be discussed at a committee, which ensures we'll at least have a shingled lighthouse for the Reunion and get a bit of use out of the new materials.

As Deputy Mayor Laura Haight put it, they don't look 'disgusting' and they should at least be given a chance. Other than those who are angry about the decision, it would be curious to see how many tourists and other visitors will notice.

The focus should now turn to a few years down the road, when the Kincardine Lighthouse can be fully designated and invested upon, to bring the entire structure back to its original glory.

Until then, let cooler heads prevail and stop making mountains out of molehills.



100 years

Rachel Sanderson photo
thunder and a bit of
Parades this weekend.
to mark the 100th
ery Saturday until the
ads the raincoat-clad
: Two-year-old Emma
her mom said.

Lighthouse complaints lead to discussion on municipal heritage

TROY PATTERSON

KINCARDINE NEWS STAFF

The renovations to the Kincardine Lighthouse tower have put the heritage community up in arms.

Council first deflected rumours last Wednesday regarding claims of "secret" council meetings that were supposedly bent on the "destruction of the lighthouse," according to Councillor Marsha Leggett.

"It's pretty easy to criticize when you don't sit on council," said Leggett.

A delegation of area residents, including Heritage Kincardine representative Jane Rigby, along with former mayor Glenn R. Sutton, Bruce Township Historical Society's Karen Ribey and local resident Charlie Hunter, laid out their concerns about the reshingling of the Kincardine Lighthouse tower.

Rigby said the lighthouse is a municipal symbol they assumed it would be protected for its historical value in its original state. "believing it would always be preserved, never be desecrated."

"Why protect our heritage?" she asked. Rigby listed various reasons for keeping up with the maintenance of the building and joined with the other delegates to suggest the lighthouse be designated a heritage structure.

She said the renovations have destroyed the 'original' siding the vertical window reveals, as well as the four-on-four window panes.

Heritage groups to discuss common ground

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She agreed the leakage from the old windows needed to be stopped, but said council should be obligated to work with Heritage Kincardine in situations where historical buildings are involved.

"The system's broke," she said. "Let's fix this ASAP."

Many councillors back-pedaled on the decision to go with the vinyl shingles, but also acknowledged a failure to communicate with Heritage Kincardine before the tower of the 1880 building was resingled with a vinyl 'faux' cedar product.

Glenn R. Sutton put together a powerpoint presentation, outlining options that could include designation of the building, as well as the replacement and restoration of the tower's original features, within a specified time frame.

Sutton said they want to work with council and help it through the decision-making process, so that all parties are satisfied by the outcome.

"We want to make sure we retain a part of our history," he said, adding that leaving the shingles on for a time may "buy some time to allow research into what they're going to do."

Deputy Mayor Laura Haight was the first to apologize, but said they did it with the best intentions.

Haight said the result was also a reaction to "years of municipal neglect," which caused the rot and damage to the interior through the windows. The decision was made with "ongoing maintenance costs" in mind, as the best way to handle the long-term water damage problem.

"I certainly knew they weren't wooden," she said. "I wasn't thrilled with it, but on we go. It's not 'disgusting' to look at."

Haight said each councillor knows of the significance of the lighthouse as an "icon" to the community.

She also questioned whether the cedar shingles were the original exterior, as some historical photos look different.

"I don't want to run the risk of doing something that's quite inaccurate," said Haight. "We want to do it right."

Those in the group assured her they were the originals.

Her solution was to pull together various groups like Heritage Kincardine, the Walker House and the Bruce Twp. Historical Society, to discuss the direction and goals of heritage issues in Kincardine, so everyone is on the same page.



Troy Patterson photo

Heritage Kincardine's Jane Rigby addressed council regarding the renovations to the Lighthouse tower last week's meeting.

"We want to make sure this doesn't happen again," she said.

Council Guy Anderson also apologized and said he had assumed the replacement would use a traditional material, but can understand why vinyl was used.

"It wasn't council's intention to make a great issue out of it," said Anderson. "There just wasn't a lot of thought put into it and we're sorry."

He agreed that a committee should be set up to look at heritage, as well as the future restoration of the lighthouse.

Council Ron Hewitt said a committee is long overdue, but didn't agree with stopping the resingling, which was initially suggested.

Council instructed Heritage Kincardine to return at a later council meeting with information and documentation for the heritage designation of the structure, which still isn't designated.

Rigby said with 175 on the heritage

registry, they're preparing to provide others to council to suggest for designation as well.

Mayor Larry Kraemer said the money can only be spent once and with a \$47,000 price tag, they should "get some use" out of them before restoration takes place.

"That way we can take a look at the future," said Kraemer, adding that if the shingles are torn off, it's a "dead loss."

"We want to ensure the integrity of the lighthouse and keep it with a good, crisp look that's something we can all be proud of."

Kraemer said the committee should focus on repairing the interior of the building and the tower, before they spend more money to resingling the structure.

Council Randy Roppel sided with the others that there was "no intent to deface" the structure, adding it's only appropriate the building is designated.

"It's nice to see politicians back-pedal isn't it," Roppel said, with laughs from the crowd. Roppel said he "looks forward to the challenge" the heritage discussion will bring forward.

With concurrence from council, CAO John deRosenroll said a committee could be formed to look at 1) Discussion of municipally owned/private historical buildings 2) Partnerships to rehabilitate the lighthouse and 3) Recommendations of heritage policies to council.

The delegation said the outcome was "favourable," as they look forward to working with the municipality towards the "right path."

Rigby said she wants to see progress move along quickly.

"There needs to be an immediate plan to reverse what has been done," she said, adding that she feels the lighthouse will never be the same again.



Herb Paetzold photo

The Kincardine News recently purchased the late William Fraser's First World War medal from collector Dave Thomson for \$100. Above, Editor Troy Patterson donated the medal to Royal Canadian Legion president Gord Wilkinson during the General Membership meeting, to hold in their collection to be displayed.