

Heritage Kenora Special Meeting Minutes

31 July 2020

PRESENT: Tim Davidson, Jeff Port, Chris Van Wallegham, Braden Murray, Melissa Shaw, Kevan Sumner

REGRETS: David Nelson, Rory McMillan

RECUSED: Randy Jackson

1. Call to order

Meeting was called to order at 9:32

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

It should be noted that Randy Jackson has recused himself from any conversation related to the Blue Heron/Former Fish Market because of a family conflict

3. Special Meeting Introduction

- The special meeting was requested by city admin and is related the potential sale of the former Blue Heron Building
- The sale of the building is contingent on the successful acquisition of a demolition permit for the building. Because the former Blue Heron building is on the City of Kenora registry of historic buildings it warrants a discussion by Heritage Kenora

4. Discussion

The discussion began with the point being made that the former fish market/Blue Heron building had enormous contextual value in the history of Kenora. That is why people have written articles and continue to talk about it today. There is also an element of nostalgia involved. That said, from an architectural standpoint it is not anything particularly special, and indeed is essentially falling into the lake more and more each day. Lastly it was noted that the standard practice of Heritage Kenora has been to work with willing owners who desire that their property be designated a heritage property. Obviously this would not be such a case.

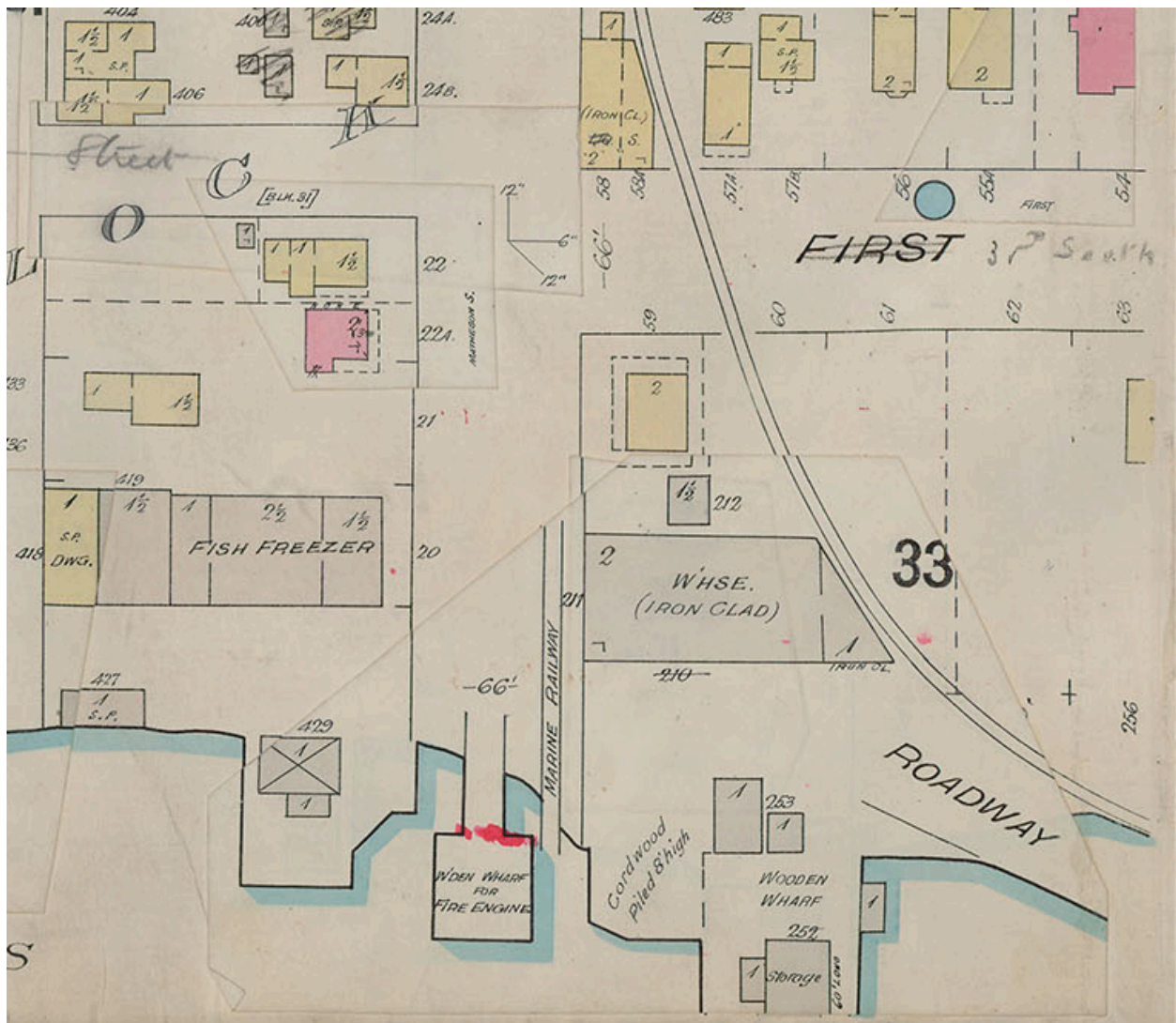
The point was made that if the building was recommended to be protected then it would likely never be sold and end its life by falling into the lake. Then we would be no further ahead.

It was again raised that there was an emotional connection to the old building for anyone who grew up in Kenora. There was also a question of what would go there next.

It was noted that the city is not aware necessarily what will go there next, but one could gather clues by looking at some of the other water front developments from the last few years. At the moment any definite answer would be conjecture, so it was left at that.

It was brought up that any new development of the site would be very much “against the grain” of any official city plans, as there is a lot of built in encouragement to maintain and build up older buildings, rather than building new. There was also a brief discussion about any issues around parking.

The question was brought up about what was formerly on the Bannister Centre site. In the moment that information was not available, but after reviewing some older maps it seems like there would have been some need to bring in fill for that site.



The point was made that for someone who did not grow up in Kenora there is no nostalgia value for the Blue Heron building. From the contextual standpoint an argument could be made for designation if the owner was really keen on it, but since it would be a disputed designation then this probably isn't the hill to die on.

If the site was designated as a protected property it would likely suffer a fate of demolition by neglect.

Jeff Port left the meeting just before 10:00am

Once everyone was satisfied that the issue had been spoken to at length there was a discussion of the process. At the time there was some confusion about what would happen next and whether Heritage Kenora would need to submit something in writing. It was determined that there would not have to be any formal communication at the moment.

There was also a question of the lack of official quorum at the meeting as there were only three voting members present. That would be noted in the report by Melissa.

Meeting was adjourned just after 10:00am