

Township of
Langley



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NEWS RELEASE

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NEW BYLAW PROTECTS VALUABLE HERITAGE SITES

From its First Nations origins through European settlement and the Hudson's Bay era, the Township of Langley is home to the earliest known settlement in the Fraser Valley. It is vital that its heritage resources be preserved and maintained, because once they are gone, the stories they tell are lost forever.

On Monday, June 11, Township of Langley Council gave three readings to a Heritage Property Maintenance Standards Bylaw that establishes minimum requirements for the care and maintenance of designated heritage properties.

There are currently 27 significant public and private properties in Langley Township, and two areas – Fort Langley and Murrayville – that have heritage designation, which provides for their long-term legal protection. However, up to now there has been no tangible way of ensuring that they are cared for and not simply left to deteriorate.

Proper maintenance is the best and most cost effective way to extend the life of a building, and the proposed bylaw provides the authority to ensure designated heritage properties are maintained to minimum standards. The bylaw is not meant to be onerous to the owners of heritage properties, but requires that the buildings be weatherproofed and kept free from infestation and vegetation overgrowth.

Owners can apply for financial support to assist with the costs of maintaining heritage buildings through a Township grant, which is offered three times a year. The next call for applications to the Heritage Building Incentive Program is August 24. Visit tol.ca/hbip.

“People are exceptional when it comes to caring for heritage properties and take great pride in maintaining and restoring them,” said Township of Langley Mayor Jack Froese. “But sometimes, these incredibly valuable and increasingly rare gems slip through the cracks.”

Earlier this year, a residence constructed in Milner in 1885 – among one of the oldest remaining buildings in the Township – was found to have deteriorated into an

unsalvageable heap. It had been left unattended for 40 years and finally collapsed into total ruin.

“It is one thing to leave a heritage building standing, to keep it intact, but we can’t say it is being protected just because it hasn’t been torn down,” Froese said. “Age, the elements, and nature will eventually take their toll. Basic maintenance will ensure these valuable links to our past do not deteriorate through neglect and can be enjoyed by everyone for years to come.”

The Heritage Property Maintenance Standards Bylaw was put forward to Council by the Township’s Heritage Advisory Committee, as part of its 2018 work plan.

For several years, the volunteer-run Committee had been discussing how to better protect heritage properties, following the loss of the historic Noel Booth Store and Gas Station in Fernridge, through misuse and lack of maintenance.

Minimum maintenance requirements for properties that are designated or located within a heritage conservation area can be established under the Local Government Act, and many other municipalities and cities throughout BC already have such bylaws in place.

The Township’s new bylaw will also prevent people from getting hurt and addresses safety issues by ensuring that the structural integrity of heritage buildings is maintained.

The bylaw will be brought forward for adoption at a future Council meeting.

For more information, visit tol.ca/hmsbylaw.