



West Hants Historical Society

281 King Street
PO Box 2335

Windsor, NS
BoN 2To

Tel: 902-798-4706

email: info@westhantshistoricalsociety.ca

President: Shirley Pineo

Secretary: Paul Brison

Dear Friends,

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We need your help.

The West Hants Historical Society needs your ideas for the land near Fort Edward.

Although the Municipal Council has not made a definite decision, we feel we should go forward and look for any ideas that citizens and cultural groups might like to share with us regarding the public use of lots P36 and P65 adjacent to Fort Edward. When we go before Council the next time, we will present some concrete ideas of the possible uses for this historical land.

We are holding an Open House on August 17 at Fort Edward to give everyone an opportunity to share ideas and comments regarding the future of this land. This event will be held between 6 pm and 8 pm. If you are unable to attend, may we suggest you email any ideas to info@westhantshistoricalsociety.ca, or drop off at the museum and they will be added to the ideas given at the Open House.

These properties were part of Fort Edward until 1967 when they were transferred to the Town of Windsor for community use. We believe these properties are of cultural and historical significance and should be retained for the community and not sold for a housing development. We further believe that, being adjacent to Fort Edward, a housing development would ruin the aesthetic of the site.

Following is a brief chronology of the historical and cultural heritage of the area.

The prominence overlooking the junction of two rivers, known to the Mi'kmaq as Pisiqid, was for millennia a gathering place and the possible location of a burying ground.

- About 1680 Acadian French began to establish farm settlements throughout the area and in 1722 built a parish church on top of the hill.
- 1750: Because of its strategic location overlooking this river junction, the British selected the hill as the location for a fort that they named Fort Edward. The Acadian parish church was dismantled to make way for the blockhouse and relocated to another site.
- A truck house (trading post) was established on the West slope of the hill to trade with the local Mi'kmaq and Acadians.
- 1755: Fort Edward was the site of the deportation of Acadians from the district Pisiqid.
- 1760: Soldiers from the fort assisted in the settlement of New England Planters in the region.
- 1760 -1763: Acadian prisoners from Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island and Eastern New Brunswick were held in and round the fort.

- With the signing of peace treaties, soldiers at the garrison were able to relocate living quarters, gardens and livestock pens outside the stockade, some on the site of the subject lands.
- 1765: A farmer's market and agricultural fair was established on the West slope of Fort Edward including on the subject lands. This exhibition became the Hants County Exhibition, the longest continuously operating exhibition in North America.
- Fort Edward was key to the defense of this region during the American Revolution. For a short time it was the home of Scottish heroine Flora McDonald.
- During the War of 1812, companies of soldiers from Fort Edward protected the region from American Privateers.
- 1832: The fort became the home garrison of the Hants County Militia.
- 1914: With the outbreak of WW1 Fort Edward became a training and debarkation base for the British (later Canadian) Expeditionary Forces including the 112th and 120th Battalions and the Jewish Legion.
- Following WW1 the fort was largely abandoned. All original buildings except the blockhouse were destroyed. The grounds became a local golf course.
- 1922: Fort Edward was designated a national historic site under the administration of Parks Canada.
- 1967: Parks Canada transferred the subject lots to the Town of Windsor for public use including the building of a community swimming pool.
- 1973: The West Hants Historical Society was founded with a mandate to promote the restoration and preservation of Fort Edward. The Society continues to provide summer guide service under contract to Parks Canada.
- 2021: The Hants West Regional Municipality proposed to rezone the subject properties to allow a multi-unit housing development. This we believe is in contravention of the agreement of 1967 with Parks Canada.

So, here we are. Please help us keep this land for the use of the public. The West Hants Historical Society has ideas as to how this property could be used to interpret and portray the cultural and historical significance of the site, but we are requesting input and an indication of interest from the community.

We need your help to convince the West Hants Regional Council to look to the future and include this piece of land in their vision of the future in which our rich cultural and historical heritage is celebrated and protected.

People come from all over the world to visit Fort Edward. Together we can make it a much better experience for visitors, thus contributing more to the local economy and pride of community.

Once this public property is lost to development, it will be lost forever.

Thank you,

Shirley Pineo
President
WHHS