



Maison Fairbairn House Newsletter No. 5

Wakefield, November, 2009

Dear Members of the Fairbairn House Cooperative:

As we approach the final months of 2009, the Directors of the Fairbairn House Heritage project are happy to report that it has been a productive year. The project is proceeding at a very satisfying pace, the timetable has been respected, and good news has come our way from local supporters.

A Public Launch and New Signage

On July 4th, the Board of Directors held an event in Hendrick Park to publicly launch the building phase of the heritage centre and unveil the new signs which now adorn the front windows and door of the Fairbairn House. Local youth had created two pieces of art to decorate the windows. And, for the entrance door, a volunteer supporter created an attractive display of historical photographs along with a short bilingual text about the project. And, as a crowning touch, a picture of the builder of the house, William Fairbairn, appears in the upstairs window, adding to the new, livelier look of the old house.

Around 50 people showed up for the event. Bagpipes could be heard in the park, adding a festive air to the launch. Mr. Roch Bouliane officially announced the financial support from the Caisse Desjardins de Masham-Luskville. Robert Bussière, Mayor of La Pêche, spoke with enthusiasm about the project. And, Michael Cooper, co-chair of our project, presented interesting features of the architectural drawings for the restored house; he then invited a young student in the crowd to help him unveil the new displays which now adorn the front windows and door of the house.

Construction

In July, the final drawings were received from our architect, Alan Hopkins. The Board is pleased with these plans and we can say that all our initial architectural expectations and needs have been met. The drawings were presented to officials of the Municipality of La Pêche in August, following which they have expressed their approval and, as a first step towards actual construction, have promised to issue a municipal building permit for work on the exterior of the house.

Fund-raising

We received great news from the Caisse Desjardins de Masham-Luskville in the spring! Following our application for funding, Mr. Roch Bouliane, Director of the local Caisse, attended our launch event at the Fairbairn House on July 4th and announced that the cooperative will be supporting the project with a financial grant of \$45,000.

Board members met with Mona Francoeur of Tourisme Outaouais in September to talk about our upcoming grant application. We wished to maximize our chances by making sure they had a good overview of our heritage project. The meeting saw enthusiasm for the project from both sides, and we received some good advice on preparing our application for funding.

This summer four local representatives from the Quebec Ministry of Communications and Culture visited Wakefield to meet with Fairbairn House board members. We received them at the Fairbairn House site and gave a thorough briefing on our project. They in turn advised us of the financial aid their ministry might provide towards restoration of the exterior of the house. They expressed a keen interest in the project, and we are currently working to obtain a Quebec government heritage designation for the house, which is required to qualify for a grant from them.

Sponsorship Assessment

Kensel Tracy from Colterman Marketing Group Canada has been working on a sponsorship assessment plan for our project since the beginning of the summer. Out of this plan, the Directors will have a variety of packages ready to be presented to potential sponsors, partners or donors, depending on their interests. One of the main components of this plan is the values assigned to the marketing assets we can offer to supporters.

Website

Our web site has a number of new features to make it more interesting. One of these is a photo gallery. We are now able to create different thematic galleries, downloading pictures with captions. Check our photo gallery every once in a while to see what's new, as we will be updating it regularly with new pictures. Also, our latest newsletters can now be found on the web site, allowing the public to get more details about the project and its advances. Please visit us at www.fairbairn.ca

Next Steps

Our Construction Committee will soon create a tender to send out to contractors asking for quotes on the renovation of the house. Once a contractor is selected, the Board will decide when to start the restoration work. Although a timetable is difficult to set up, construction should start in spring 2010!

After completion of our sponsorship assessment plan we will be inviting potential supporters to join the project. This activity will commence early in the new year.

Membership

To gain momentum, it is important for the Fairbairn House Cooperative to increase its membership. We now have 80 members, coming from the Gatineau Valley, as well as from other areas of Quebec and Canada: the Board is organizing a drive to increase this number to 200 members or more by next spring. Any assistance or suggestions that you, as current members, can offer with this, or to further the progress of the project in other ways, will be much appreciated. The fee for a lifetime membership in the cooperative is only \$25.

We wish to thank all of you for your support and look forward to hearing from you, and seeing many of you at our next Annual General Meeting to be held in the spring of 2010.

For further information, please e-mail us at info@fairbairn.ca or Fabian Mugny at fabian.mugny@fairbairn.ca or write to the Fairbairn House Cooperative at Box 195, Wakefield, QC, J0X 3G0, or telephone Michael Cooper at 819-459-2787.