

It is a pleasure to present the third Annual Chair's Report.

I would like to thank members for your participation at meetings and for all your suggestions both in person and via email. I also want to thank your board of the Friends of Auchmar for their regular attendance at monthly board meetings, for their support and for their diligence in working to keep Auchmar in public ownership and suggesting ways to inform and involve the citizens of Hamilton in the preservation of Auchmar. Your board works diligently to further the mission of the Friends to *bring together those persons committed to the history, preservation, conservation, rehabilitation and continuing public use of the Auchmar Manor House, its associated buildings and cultural landscape.*

As you know, June 20th, 2013 your board submitted a formal document in response to the City of Hamilton's Request for Information (RFI). We received support in writing from 6 non-binding partners. The City of Hamilton received submissions from 7 groups -- the Friends who partnered with Heritage Hamilton Foundation, CoBALT Connects, the Landmark Group, Mohawk College, NovaCare Communities, Sahar Hospitality and Courtyard Marriott.

At the September 5th 2013 meeting of the General Issues Committee (GIC) the Auchmar Request for Information (RFI) submissions were reported as received, but not made public. At that meeting, it was recommended that the next step would be Request for Proposals (RFP)

On September 11th, 2013 Hamilton City Council directed staff to proceed with a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Auchmar Estate. That recommendation was amended by Councillor Terry Whitehead who added the words, *non-binding* preceding the words, *Request for Proposal*. The motion as amended was approved.

In June 2014, Councillor Terry Whitehead and City Manager Chris Murray announced receipt of a secret, unsolicited offer from a local consortium to purchase Auchmar. Since the offer to scrap the RFP was put forward at the same time as Hamilton city council was proceeding with a request for proposals, councillors were divided over the decision. To scrap the announced RFP rankled some councillors, who voted to continue with the RFP process. Some councillors said they did not have enough information to support studying the offer, while others considered it improper to circumvent protocol by going outside the RFP process. One councillor said the secret bid was from a reputable group of local organizations, but not all councillors were in on the secret. It was reported that several mountain councillors and those from the amalgamated towns voted to stick with the request for proposals - to be transparent and follow protocol since the Request for Proposal had been confirmed even though a date for submission had not yet been announced.

One month later in July 2014, the City of Hamilton formally announced the Auchmar Request for Proposal with a submission date of Thursday October 9th. Since that time your board has been working with non-binding partners to draft and submit the RFP for the Use, Adaptive Reuse, Conservation, Management and Environmental Stewardship of the Auchmar Estate

According to the legal requirements set out by the City of Hamilton, no proponent was allowed to contact any member of city council, city staff or other proponents or risk being disqualified. We do not know the names of the other proponents but we will confirm the status of the RFP as soon as we are notified.

Other happening include a meeting of the Friend of Auchmar on Thursday April 24, when Thomas Wickes and Kiki Aravopoulos from the Ontario Heritage Trust and Anna Bradford, Director of Tourism & Culture, City of Hamilton outlined the role of the Trust and the City of Hamilton for Auchmar's designation and easement. The standing room only crowd was obviously keen to learn about the designation and the easement at Auchmar.

Due to ongoing repair of the stone walls and entrance gates to the former stables, Auchmar is a construction site. As a result Doors Open at Auchmar was cancelled in May 2013 and again in May 2014. This work was required because the city received a **notice from OHT that the walls and gates had to be repaired**. As a note of information- the city purchased Auchmar in 1999 – but until a few years ago little maintenance work was done, thus 15 years later the cost to do those repairs has greatly increased. It is thanks to the dedication of Anna Bradford and her colleagues that monies were found for roof and chimney repairs and now for wall and entrance gates restoration.

To further investigate the protection of Auchmar buildings and the heritage cultural landscape, Robin McKee a founding board member of the The Lower Grand River Land Trust along with me your chair met in August with Marilyn Havelka, Chief Administrative Officer of Ruthven Park, now The Lower Grand River Land Trust Inc. a National Historic --protected site of 1,600 acres. Our purpose is to investigate the establishment of an Auchmar Land Trust.

It was interesting and important to learn that on April 2, 2014 Allison Maxted and Mike Borrelli hosted a meeting in downtown Hamilton to launch a Community Land Trust for downtown Hamilton. We hope to see that Land Trust broadened to include all of Hamilton. Robin McKee is liaising with that group as they begin to organize and form a board.

Thanks go to Frank Bernt, John Kajaste, Robin McKee and John Buchanan who manned the Friends of Auchmar exhibit at the Concession Street Festival in August. Your board and members try to participate at heritage association events.

Thanks to artist Norris Podetz, a member of the Friends of Auchmar, who designed the Auchmar Christmas Card, and thank you cards – all profits are to be used by the Friends of Auchmar. Norris' current sketches such as the archway into the stables are on display at the front of this room.

Thanks go to Robert Gill, our webmaster who also manages Durand's Website and Eric Lootsma, a Friends board member for continued upgrades to the Friends of Auchmar website. Please continue to visit the Friends website and forward your suggestions to us for improvements.

Thanks also to Richard Allen, of Renew Hamilton. Richard video tapes most Friends of Auchmar members' meetings His blog from the Nov 2012 Economics of Heritage Preservation is on both the Friends of Auchmar and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce web sites

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the Friends of Auchmar's Short Term Goal is to Increase education about Auchmar and increase membership through – events

Our LONG TERM GOAL is to have the Auchmar Estate designated a National Historic Site and become a Hamilton Community Land Trust to ensure the Preservation/Restoration/and Maintenance of the entire Auchmar estate and to ensure that Auchmar remains in city ownership which then ensures public access.

We request your suggestions and participation in working out and achieving those goals. These goals are consistent with The City of Hamilton's heritage designation and the Ontario Heritage Trust's easement.

This is the 2013 -2014 Annual Report for the Friends of Auchmar.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Gower Dent, Chair.

Friends of Auchmar / October 9, 2014

Thank you