



Township of Black River–Matheson

MUSEUM ARTIFACTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Museum Artifacts Advisory Committee (the "Committee") is established by Council to provide advice and recommendations respecting the assessment, stewardship, safeguarding, and future handling of artifacts currently stored at the former Thelma Miles Museum.

The Committee is intended to assist Council in responding in a structured, transparent, and responsible manner to community concerns regarding the care, ownership status, and potential return of loaned artifacts. The Committee's work will support informed Council decision-making while the museum remains closed and no determination has been made regarding its future operations.

The Committee operates in an advisory capacity only and does not replace the authority of Council or the administrative responsibilities of staff.

2. Mandate and Scope

The Committee acts in an advisory capacity only. Its mandate is limited, task-focused, and non-operational, with a defined scope intended to support Council direction.

The Committee shall:

- Assist staff in reviewing and validating an inventory of artifacts currently held by the Township, including identifying items that are loaned versus donated, where documentation exists;
- Provide advice on appropriate processes for the safeguarding, storage, and basic preservation of artifacts while decisions are pending;
- Provide input on procedures for responding to requests from individuals or families seeking the return of loaned artifacts, including documentation, verification, record-keeping, and transparency considerations;
- Consider and provide advice on high-level options for the future handling of artifacts, which may include return to lenders, continued municipal storage,



transfer to another institution, or limited public display in alternative locations, subject to Council direction;

- Identify gaps in existing policies, agreements, or records related to museum artifacts and provide recommendations to Council on any frameworks, guidelines, or policies that may be required;
- Provide advice that supports respectful, transparent, and responsible treatment of cultural and historical materials, recognizing their significance to the community.

The Committee shall not:

- Make decisions regarding the disposition, transfer, or return of artifacts;
- Negotiate or enter into agreements on behalf of the Township;
- Direct staff, volunteers, or contractors;
- Plan, operate, or fund museum programming, exhibitions, or fundraising activities;
- Assume or imply that the museum will reopen unless explicitly directed by Council.

3. Authority

The Committee is established by Council and is accountable to Council. The Committee has no independent authority and may only make recommendations for Council's consideration.

All decisions related to artifacts, including returns, transfers, or long-term use, remain the authority of Council.

4. Membership

The Committee shall be composed of:

- A minimum of four (4) members of the public appointed by Council; and
- One (1) member of Council

The Clerk, or designate, shall act as a resource person and Secretary to the Committee.

In appointing members, Council shall consider demonstrated interest or experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Local history or heritage;



- Archival, museum, or records-related work;
- Community engagement;
- Research or documentation.

5. Term of Office

The Committee is established as a time-limited advisory body.

Members shall be appointed until the Committee has completed its mandate and submitted a final report with recommendations to Council, or until Council determines otherwise.

Council may dissolve the Committee at any time by resolution.

6. Meetings

The Committee shall meet as required to fulfill its mandate, with the frequency determined by the Committee in consultation with staff.

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Township's Procedural By-law and applicable municipal policies.

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of appointed members.

Minutes shall be recorded and forwarded to Council for information.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

In fulfilling its mandate, the Committee shall:

- Review information and background materials provided by staff regarding the status, condition, and documentation of artifacts;
- Provide thoughtful, evidence-based advice and recommendations to Council through staff reports, meeting minutes, or formal submissions;
- Support a fair, consistent, and well-documented approach to artifact-related inquiries from the public;
- Act in a respectful, collaborative, and impartial manner, recognizing the cultural, historical, and emotional significance of artifacts to individuals, families, and the broader community.

All use of staff time, municipal resources, or expenditures related to artifact handling or committee activities shall remain subject to Council approval and applicable municipal policies.



8. Conduct and Governance

Committee members shall comply with all applicable municipal policies, including but not limited to:

- Code of Conduct;
- Conflict of Interest policies;
- Confidentiality requirements.

Members are expected to participate constructively and to avoid representing personal opinions as Council direction.

9. Reporting to Council

The Committee shall provide updates to Council through meeting minutes and may submit interim or final reports as requested by Council.

The primary deliverable of the Committee shall be a report to Council outlining findings, options, and recommendations related to the handling of museum artifacts.

10. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference may be amended or rescinded by Council at any time by resolution.