

The meeting opened at 9:55 am with John Sneyd, President, chairing and members in attendance. Since this meeting immediately followed the AGM, there were no further announcements so, President John introduced Tammy Adkin, Director, Guelph Museums.

Bio

Tammy Adkin has spent the last three decades helping people and organizations tell their stories.

Since 2013, those stories have been about the fascinating people, places and events that have shaped the city of Guelph. As manager of Guelph Museums, she has worked with an accomplished team of curators, educators and researchers, to commemorate the worldwide impact of doctor, soldier and poet John McCrae; and to shine a light on the lesser-known but nevertheless important narratives that have influenced Guelph and the world.

With a degree in Communication Studies from the University of Windsor, Tammy began her career as a journalist, before transitioning into progressively senior communication and management roles within the non-profit and private sectors.

After working in the private and social service sectors, Tammy found her passion working in culture, beginning as Director of Marketing and Development, and later as Executive Director, for the London Regional Children’s Museum. Following time as Partnerships Manager at Museum London, Tammy joined the team at Guelph Museums, overseeing the municipality’s museums including Guelph Civic Museum, McCrae House National Historic Site, and Locomotive 6167.

An enthusiastic supporter of community engagement, Tammy has served in a volunteer capacity as president of the Ontario Museum Association, the president of the Canadian Association of Science Centres, founding chairperson of the St. Andre Bessette Trust Fund, and executive committee for the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum.

Presentation

This interesting talk encompassed expanding our understanding of the Guelph story through Guelph Museums & Culture.

Guelph Museums encompasses the McCrae House and Locomotive 6167 on Wellington Street next to the River Run Centre, on the banks of the Speed River.

Guelph Museums and Culture was founded in 1997 and reflects its over 50,000 items in its collection. It also manages the Public Art Collection. It originally reflected a white perspective with a Sottish heritage and later an Italian perspective. The Guelph Museums now presents “From Authority to Catalyst” perspective for community stories. It has shifted its focus from objects to stories of those objects.

Another influence of the work at the Museum is the “Truth and Reconciliation” influence. For instance, on the issue of totem poles; the view of First Nations People is that the totem poles came from the earth and should be returned to the earth rather than displayed in museums. Indigenous knowledge keepers asked for recognition and there are thousands of indigenous peoples living in this area. We acknowledged that the history we were presenting was limited and it is important to approach this work with humility.

Another influence is recognizing the system of racism especially following the murder of George Floyd. We need to recognize the gap in the history of Black history.

We also tell Guelph's founding story beginning with John Galt and the Canada Company. Originally John Galt colonized 200 acres of Indigenous lands and reconciliation starts with the truth. The nations that used this land were migratory and this area was referred to as "The Between the Lakes Treaty Number Three" This land was ceded with the treaty signed with John Brant, a Mohawk Chief.

Another area of influence is the remembrance of Col. John McCrae and the McCrae House where John McCrae was born on Water Street in Guelph.

The Museum has tried to memorialize those who were not recognized such as women, Blacks and Indigenous people. Some of this has been done through the 1939-1945 Cenotaph Project.

In summary, these are the three major influences of the Guelph Museums.

There is contemporary collecting being carried out and learning from issues relating to COVID and working with the Black Heritage Society. It's about expanding our stories. "Your stories live here." A commitment to connecting citizens.

Tammy Adkin ended by responding to questions from the membership.

Next Meeting: June 22, 2023, with Kris LeBlanc: Cannabis Issues

Adjournment @11:02 am

Recording Secretary: Kerry Gennings