

17 November 2021

Dear Distinguished Members of Amherstburg Town Council,



The Amherstburg Freedom Museum has been serving the community of Amherstburg and surrounding areas for over 45 years and our Nazrey African Methodist Episcopal Church has acted as a symbol of hope for Freedom Seekers and their descendants for almost 175 years, even before Amherstburg was Incorporated as a Town.

Amherstburg was among the primary entry points of the Underground Railroad into Canada and offered a home for both Free Black and formerly enslaved persons. It was here, in Amherstburg, that they began a new life in freedom, becoming landowners, and establishing churches, business, and schools to uplift their community. They also started families and many of their descendants still reside in Essex County today.

It is because of this significant history that the Amherstburg Freedom Museum is in full support of the T.H.R.I.V.E.S' Heritage White Paper and agree that history/heritage should be on the list of most important things to residents of Amherstburg. The history that the Amherstburg Freedom Museum shares does not just involve what is found on our property, but the history of the spaces that surround it, throughout Amherstburg. We cannot limit the history we share and in order to give a complete history to visitors, we need to protect the many heritage spaces that exist throughout the Town because they are also part of the Museum's story/history as well. A Heritage Conservation District would help ensure the preservation of historic buildings throughout Amherstburg and aid in facilitating our goal of a complete and accurate history.

There are many benefits, especially economic and educational, to supporting heritage spaces. Not only does the Amherstburg Freedom Museum attract tourists and researchers from across Canada, but also the United States, especially those who are either tracing their roots or want to feel a connection to the history of the Underground Railroad and Black Settlement in Canada. Too often, Canadians (and Americans) are taught an incomplete history that portrays the lives of Freedom Seekers in Canada as without challenges or progress, but it is important to show the Black community contributed to the Amherstburg we know it today.

This significant history should act as a source of pride for residents, so why not celebrate that by investing more in the Town's heritage? T.H.R.I.V.E.S' Heritage White Paper echoes the Amherstburg Freedom Museum's message and mandate to preserve and share history, which is why we stand in support of this initiative. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or the Amherstburg Freedom Museum.

Sincerely,

Monty Logan  
Board President  
Amherstburg Freedom Museum  
519-736-5433