

# Incorporation “breathes new life” into Thorold’s Museum

Sep 13, 2019 1:00 PM by: [Cathy Pelletier](#)



2 / 3 Attending the historic occasion were (l-r) board members Tom Russell, Ken Atmekjian, Albert Secord, Randy Barnes, Steve Fulton, Rob Leverty, executive director of the Ontario Historical Society, and board members Sarah King Head, and Diane Barnes. Bob Liddycoat / Thorold News



Thorold’s Museum came one step closer to becoming incorporated this week.

Up until now, “There hasn’t been a solid place to store Thorold’s rich history,” said Steve Fulton, UE, president of Ontario Genealogical Society.

“Rob Leverty is here today to have board members sign a document of incorporation to breathe legal life into this Museum,” Fulton told the Thorold News, adding that currently, all its contents belong to the Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society (TBHS).

“Through good graces with the City (of Thorold), they have given us this space but now, it will have non-profit status and can get insurance, and issue tax receipts for donations. Incorporation is the pillar, and you can build everything upon that.”

Leverty, as executive director of the Ontario Historical Society, explained that he was making a site visit to the Thorold Museum to ensure it met the criteria for becoming incorporated by the OHS.

“We have to be convinced that you will continue this, and be interested in history. You must have a board of directors and a president and a secretary, which you do. You need a constitutional bylaw. It must have a not-for-profit statement. It needs a dissolution clause, and you have that.”

“Incredible visionaries who drafted this legislation in 1899 were concerned about the loss of history, especially in this area,” which closely borders the U.S., Leverty added. “So they put in a clause. By incorporating, and having your own dissolution clause, those assets will remain in Thorold. When we incorporate you, it’s called ‘incorporation through affiliation,’ and you are still a separate legal entity, so we can’t interfere with your rights, but the Province wants to see that you maintain an annual membership.”

For a fee of \$400, “We help you in the future.”

The OHS is a not-for-profit, government organization, said Leverty.

“An act to incorporate the Historical Society was passed in 1899 establishing the OHS as a legal entity. We’re the only not-for-profit in North America that has the legal power to incorporate historical societies. We incorporated the TBHS years ago.”

According to Leverty, 132 years ago, eight local historical societies, including the TBHS, “emerged from the grass roots and said, ‘We want a provincial organization to support and help us.’”

“In 1899, the Province gave us \$500 to start publishing our journal, *Ontario History*. It’s all produced by volunteers. We’re the only provincial peer organization left in the country that still does a peer review. Organizations in more than 55 countries are now subscribed to the journal. We’ve just made it electronically available and soon we will put on our website everything we’ve published since 1899.”

In 1912, Waterloo's work of incorporating a historical society served as a precedent to establish a museum, continued Leverty.

"A lot of amalgamations in 1998 had municipalities decide they didn't want museums."

The Friends of Beaverdams Church was also incorporated in 2013, said Sarah King Head, Thorold's official historian, who added that the OHS is "authorized to protect the property and assets of non-profit corporations. Importantly, it can hold these in trust, if necessary, until another non-profit is found to operate the corporation."

She added, "The TBHS can't legally consider itself a museum without being incorporated as a non-profit. But because the overheads are usually so high, a lot of the smaller organizations look to the OHS" for help.

Leverty said he'd submit the signed documents to OHS headquarters in Willowdale, where the board "will vote early next week, and, if passed, the documents will be submitted to Toronto, "and then you'll be officially incorporated."

---

## How did this story make you feel?

[view results >](#)



Happy



Amused



Afraid



Don't Care



Sad



Frustrated



Angry

## Comments (0)

Dialogue and debate are integral to a free society and we welcome and encourage you to share your views on the issues of the day. We ask that you be respectful of others and their points of view, refrain from personal attacks and stay on topic. To learn about our commenting policies and how our community-based moderation works, please read our [Community Guidelines](#).

---

---

---

***About the Author: Cathy Pelletier***



Cathy Pelletier is an award-winning newspaper journalist/editor who writes for  
ThoroldNews.com  
[Read more](#)