

DOUCET HENESSY BRAIN-SAILING SESSION

February 22, 2013

Bathurst, NB

In attendance: Rolande O'Connell, Doucet Hennessy Association member
Rod O'Connell, Doucet Hennessy Association member
David Geris, NB Tourism, Heritage & Culture
Meredith Caissie, City of Bathurst
Halldis Wesenberg, Doucet Hennessy Association member
André Laplante, NB Economic Development
Guy Tremblay, NB Tourism, Heritage & Culture
Jean-Paul Boudreau, Enterprise Chaleur
Diane Rennie, Doucet Hennessy Association membre
Melynda Jarratt, Doucet Hennessy Association member
Terry Power, NB Tourism, Heritage & Culture - Facilitator
Denise Boudreau, NB Tourism, Heritage & Culture

A. Background assumption:

Architecture Study: The exterior valid, while the interior no longer as true to original construction date. Group wants to preserve the house and history- unique English/ French background.

- Present thinking- heritage center
- Financial: Report indicates 1.2M renovations plus additional money for operating.
- Moving forward: need a feasibility/ business case that deals with sustainability for the long term.

B. Brain-sailing:

Asked the group to just list things they think are important or unique about the house. We choose five headings: People, Events, Product, Arts & Crafts, Other.

1. People:

- prominent characters, cultural, political and religious
- Entrepreneurship & Economics
- Acadian, Irish, Scottish and First Nations Cultures
- Father Varrily – Priest who lived across the street and owned the house in 1907. Because church had burned at one point the house was used as a church. The house was at that time sanctified
- Bishop would have play role in whole North Shore of New Brunswick.
- Missionary stayed at the house
- Midwife – Anne Arsenault wife of Charlitte Doucet (and they would baptize children). - This could be a story in itself.
- Father (Pere) Charles Doucet
- MLA after Confederation was Francis McManus 1800's. He was in the first and second Provincial Assembly of NB.

2. Events: - historical facts*

- Birthing room – generation stayed, lived, died in the house
- Funerals were held n the parlor downstairs
- Relation, linguistic / religious (story of death of Protestant in a Catholic house)(

- There were two wind mills on the premises. (flour, wood - circa 1790)
- 80 employees - Hilarion Hache (paid with tokens – to be exchange for goods at store)
- Robbery of store
- Business at that house – hat shop, garage, store of goods
- Scandal – Protestant attended Catholic service
- Connection to the Deportation – Charlitte escaped in 1755 and moved to PEI – Village de Saint-Pierre. When he moved to Nipisiguit (Bathurst) he named the main artery St.Pierre- St. Peters Ave.
- ***1970's Fidele Theriault GNB Historian– construction of the Acadian Village – went to see Beatrice Hennessy, fell in love with house history. Study of the church done by Fidele in 1970's

3. Products:

- Millinery – hat making
- Flower gardens
- Farms, ducks – sheep, etc
- Grave digger

4. Arts & Crafts:

- Musical – (Manus Kane) piano prodigy contracted tuberculosis
- Painting – Beatrice Hennessy
- Scholar – Father Varrily read Gaelic, French, English,
- People made all their own goods- dress maker (This could lead to FIBRE ART Dispal)

5. Other:

- Structure – one of the last remaining old structure in Bathurst (prominent site)
- Location – prominent, visibility – 10,000 car by /day possibly 25 000 summer(This may be a low estimate)
- Sentinel on top of hill
- Commercial area – corner of Church, residential & business (bridges commercial to residential)
- Prominent intersection
- Icon of the city (church)
- Lots of parking nearby and 10 on site
- Proximity to downtown and attraction
- Connection to historical graveyards across the street (Catholic) and behind the house (Protestant)
- Master carpenter
- Connection to Acadian Village (Charles – son of Charlitte- brother Romain has his house at Acadian Village in Bertrand
- Eudistes wanted to buy lot – threaten to sell the land to Protestant – Eudistes bought land from who?????
- Viewfinder for the whole city
- Centre d'études acadiennes – connection to other cultures \cross connect
- Bricks – ballast for ships – used in the foundation – connection to seafaring - type of brick/ cellar
- 1922 – last sailing ship left harbor from the house/ school children had day off to view that event
- Opportunity to write book

Issues:

- Close to commercial KFC
- ******DO YOU ONLY FOCUS ON TOURISM OR BECOME MORE A COMMUNITY HOUSE*******

C. Partnerships :

Does the work done under the themes lead us to any conclusions or potential partners that can help us preserve the house and address sustainability?

Themes:

- People
- Event
- Product
- Arts & crafts
- Others: Entrepreneurship, Writers, Link to Acadian Peninsula, Link to Scottish Culture, Links to the sea (ballast used in the cellar) logging, tugboats, Drama of the story – family history

****5000 square feet available

D. WHAT CAN WE DO? WHY? We brain sailed ideas and then prioritized the top three. (***)

- (***) COMMUNITY GARDENS – LACK OF GREEN SPACE IN THE CITY THAT IS DEDICATED TO FLOWERS (photograph, limited with local forest, *Partners: City of Bathurst, Wannamakers horticulturist, nurseries, Gardening clubs, photographers, photo clubs,*
- (***) Art and Culture Center - creative cultural space (artist incubator) in Bathurst (7 rooms upstairs – turned into offices, provided service Internet) leads to creation of events, meetings – revenue generator *Partners: Prominent artist or family of, provincial body NB Arts Foundation, Army Engineers, etc.* and or Cultural center *Partners: Fidele Theriault, Irish & Scottish Societies, Acadian Society – SAANB, SOciete Historique Nicholas Denys, (This could be linked to the priority under Art Center)*
- Writer in residence, books to be sold *Partners: Book stores, UdeM, CCNB, University Program , UNB, St. Thomas, Mount Allison, Sackville,*
- Gallery for prominent artists – different than Bay Breeze Gallery (Prominent proven artist in residence) for larger travelling exhibitions e.g. Claude Picard, Nere DeGrace – recognize our own! Promote, showcase, etc. *Partners: Prominent artist or family of, provincial body NB Arts Foundation,*
- Accommodation – lodging, Inn, Hostel *Partners: Holy Rosary Corp., Boutique Hotel, location could attract such project, local accommodation owners, Village Historique Acadien*
- (***) Themed Café – menu created from the history of the house *Partners: Entrepreneur, local business people,*
- Winery – micro brewery – Don't have that in this region *Partners: Pump House products, Picaroons products & owners, could create product specific to the house,*
- Conference Area- meeting space, workshops, for house users *Partners:*
- Retail business – rented out –Starbucks, etc. *Partners: Starbucks, Second Cup, Timothy or David Teas*
- Multi cultural/ multi discipline center for teaching and learning music, art - Salon style *Partners: Fidele Theriault, Irish & Scottish Societies, Acadian Society – SAANB, SOciete Historique Nicholas Denys,*
- History Interpretation – panels? *Partners:*

- Center available for wellness and health nonprofit organizations *Partners: Doctors, Inclusive Communities and Healthy Living GNB, Health food store, Yoga/ Pilates Instructors,*
- Residence for rent *Partners: Executive apartment, real estate company, -*

RETAIL POSSIBILITIES:

- Café, restaurant,
- Gaps, outlet opportunity

E. Additional questions (and quick group answers) to initiate debate and reflection:

1. *Why save the house?* Part of Bathurst identity, preserving connection to history, grew up in the house – personal interest, immortalized ancestor Charlitte Doucet,
2. *What is the public interest?* Value of history, know where you come from – roots, tangible connection to history, something to inspire – symbol of endurance/renewal/ the best looking place in Bathurst,
3. *Why should public funding go into this project?* Restore history, bring back to life a very important part of the history, GNB role to preserve, history/heritage, sense of place preservation,
4. *What is the community prepared to contribute?* Time, talent, support & understanding of project, people power, money – fundraising,

FUNDRAISING – BUILDING IT: Is that doable? 1/3 - 1/3- **1/3- \$500,000** in kind labor – plumbing, electrical and construction – army – community, municipality might play a role, corporate donation: Federation des Caisses Populaires, Doucet Landscaping, fundraising event: e.g. tree in middle of frozen river – guess when tree is going to sink – gambling, 50/50 draw – Big Brother/Sister draw (Gold Rush Info: <http://www.bbbsmiramichi.com/goldrush.html>)

F. Sustainability.

Who is the group moving the project forward? Organizational structure, are you the facilitator or leader?

Next Steps:

Digest today's info. Develop time frame.

Short Term-urgent, immediate issues (heating, plumbing) mortgage payments,

Long term – identify partners and road to sustainability.

Feasibility study (Consider information above and pick a clear mandate)

Facilitator comments:

- *The group needs to have a focus on what path they feel is the most appropriate for obtaining sustainability.*
- *Identify the most logical and/or appropriate potential partners.*
- *The group should clarify their role in future development, and be clear where they think the group can play a role. (i.e. Leading? supporting?, fund raising?, operations and implementation role?. Or a combination of some of these.)*
- *Strongly suggest they consider some of the information above before moving to fast into a feasibility or business plan phase. A little more work here will make the next phase more effective.*