Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society (PALS) fonds


RG 678

Brock University Archives

Creator: John Bacher for the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society (PALS)

Extent: 65 cm of textual records (2 boxes)

Abstract: Fonds contains material about the activities of the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society (PALS). Most of the material concerns Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, and Niagara-on-the-Lake. A significant portion of the material concerns the proposed Canadian Motor Speedway development in Fort Erie. Other materials are more general and concern the Niagara Region and Greater Horseshoe Area. The fonds consists mostly of reports, with some correspondence, petitions, and maps.

Materials: Reports, correspondence, petitions, maps.

Repository: Brock University Archives

Processed by: Chantal Cameron

Last updated: January 2019

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Acquisition info.: Material was donated by John Bacher in 2018.

Administrative history:

The Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society (PALS) was formed in 1976 by a group of individuals concerned about the future of Canada’s agricultural self-sufficiency. Founding members included NDP MPP Mel Swart, Brock University Professor Bob Hoover, as well as Gracia Janes, John Bacher, and 26 others. The non-profit, charitable organization is based in St. Catharines, Ontario. PALS efforts have focused on land use within the Niagara region, although their activities, and membership, are not limited to the area.

The protection of the unique tender fruit and grape lands of the Niagara Peninsula has been the most pressing concern of PALS. Urban development consistently threatened these lands. PALS worked to educate the public and presented briefs to all levels of government in an attempt to bring awareness to the issue. A lack of effective government action at any level from 1978-1980 prompted PALS to take the case for the land to two Ontario Municipal Board Hearings. The decisions which resulted from these hearings (in Feb. 1980 and Feb. 1981) directed the Region of Niagara to redirect growth away from the tender fruit and grape lands and to consider the boundaries bordering on 52,000 acres of such land as “permanent”. In 2001, these boundaries were breached when the Ontario Municipal Board approved the expansion of the urban boundary of Fonthill, involving 600 acres of tender fruit land. This loss prompted the 2005 Greenbelt Act, which determines areas within Southern Ontario that can and cannot be developed.

Another important aspect of PALS work, as stated in their charter, is promoting the farm industry by helping the farmer. To this end, they produced a document, Support for Farmers: Agricultural Support Policy (1983), informed by farmers who belonged to the organization and other experts. Some of the recommendations included the need for a reassessment of the tariff policy that had been in place since the 1930s; an opposition to the importation and promotion of foreign foods just prior to and during harvest here; and more promotion of the use of local produce and the adoption of a symbol to indicate Canadian, Provincial or locally grown produce. This document was issued twice and distributed widely across Canada.

PALS has also been very active in the promotion and development of a voluntary land protection program that protects farmers and the farmland by compensating the farmer for restrictive covenants on land use. This concept of “land trusts” was first investigated by PALS in the late 1980s, in response to difficult economic times faced by farmers. PALS brought the director of the Maryland Farmland Preservation Programme to Niagara for a Land at Risk Conference, and began promoting the concept to all levels of government and within the farm...
community. The government established a Tender Fruit Lands Committee to investigate the use of what were now called “easements”. In February of 1995, the Minister of Agriculture announced the enactment of the Niagara Tender Fruit Lands Program. Over 60% of the tender fruit farmers applied, and a committee was appointed to determine who should receive the money first for the restrictive covenants to be placed on their land. The program experienced several delays for various reasons, and was eventually scrapped when a new government was elected later that year.

PALS remains active and continues to press the government for a voluntary land protection program that uses restrictive covenants to save tender fruit and grape lands for future generations of farmers and urbanites.

Scope and content:

Fonds contains material about the activities of the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society (PALS). Most of the material concerns Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, and Niagara-on-the-Lake. A significant portion of the material concerns the proposed Canadian Motor Speedway Development in Fort Erie. Other materials are more general and concern the Niagara Region and the Greater Horseshoe Area. The fonds consists mostly of reports, with some correspondence, petitions and maps. A few of the organization’s newsletters were removed and added to the newsletters in a separate PALS archive (RG 547).

Organization:

The fonds was organized into four series:

   Sub-series A: Reports
   Sub-series B: Ontario Municipal Board
   Sub-series C: Letters and Petitions
   Sub-series D: Documents

   Sub-series A: Reports
   Sub-series B: Ontario Municipal Board

Series IV: Niagara Region Documents, 1981-2018

Series V: Golden Horseshoe Reports and Documents, 1985-2013

Inventory:


Sub-series A: Reports, 2009-2010


1.9 Traffic Impact Assessment Appendices. Urban & Environmental Management Inc. Includes Ministry of Transportation correspondence; HCM level of service descriptions; Synchro output (existing conditions); Synchro output (2012 total, no improvements); Synchro output (2017 total, no improvements); Synchro output (2022 total, no improvements); Synchro output (2012 background); Synchro output (2017 background); and Synchro output (2022 background).


**Sub-series B: Ontario Municipal Board, 2009-2014, n.d.**

1.14 Material compiled by PALS re: OMB case concerning Fort Erie Official Plan Amendment #4 and Regional Niagara Official Plan Amendment #3, June 20, 2012. Contains witness statements by Michal Dickman and Hugh Gayler, as well as photographs of Millers Creek.

1.15 Environmental Impact Study—OMB Case no. PL100362—Witness Statements and Reports, 2010-2012, n.d. Includes witness statements of Sean Colville, Anthony Goodban, and Al Sandilands; *Environmental Impact Study for the Canadian Motor Speedway* prepared by Colville Consulting Inc.; and an assessment of the hedgerow which would be impacted by the Canadian Motor Speedway, by Colville Consulting Ltd.

1.16 Schedules of Names with respect to written submissions/petitions in opposition and in support, in the matter of an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board re: Canadian Motorsports Speedway, 2009.


1.18 Ontario Municipal Board list of appellants appealing the passing of a zoning bylaw, 2010.

1.19 Ontario Municipal Board documents re: Canadian Motorsports Speedway, 2010-2014.
Contains notices of appeals with supporting documentation, including a proposed zoning amendment by-law.

**Sub-series C: Letters and Petitions, 2009**

1.20 Letters of Support, 2009. Contains letters of support for the Canadian Motor Speedway Project sent to the Town of Fort Erie.


1.22 Petition by the Planned Speedway Concerned Citizens Group, 2009. A petition objecting to the development of the proposed Canadian Motor Speedway.


**Sub-series D: Documents, 1996-2010**

1.25 Maps, 2006-2009. Contains maps of the Miller Creek Wetland Complex; Frenchman’s Creek Wetland Complex; Town of Fort Erie Official Plan (Natural Heritage Features); Town of Fort Erie Official Plan (Natural Hazards and Fish Habitat); Town of Fort Erie Official Plan (Fort Erie Land Use Plan); Opportunities & Constraint Map prepared for Canadian Motor Speedway as part of the Environmental Impact Study; and an Ecological Land Classification Map prepared for Canadian Motor Speedway as part of the Environmental Impact Study.

1.26 Articles, 1996-2003. Contains *Impervious Surface Coverage: the Emergence of a Key Environmental Indicator*; and *The biotic integrity of streams in urban and suburbanizing landscapes*.


1.29 Presentations and Remarks, 2010. Contains remarks by Ken DePodesta, principal consultant with AMEC Earth and Environmental; a response by PALS to the proposed zoning by-law amendment re: the Canadian Motor Speedway; a letter by Claire
MacSweyn in support of the Canadian Motor Speedway; a presentation by Susan Speck expressing concerns about the proposed zoning by-law amendment for the Canadian Motor Speedway; a letter from Jesse Mason of the Canadian Motor Speedway to the Chairman, Mayor, Council and staff; remarks to Fort Erie Council-in-Committee by Bob Martindale and Citizens’ Coalition of Greater Fort Erie; and remarks by Dianne Giliforte to the Mayor and Town Council expressing concerns about the proposed Motorway.

1.30 Frenchman’s Creek, 2009. Contains slides from a presentation featuring images of Frenchman’s Creek.


2.2 Amendment 107—Golf Villas—City of Niagara Falls, 2009-2013. Contains correspondence, reports, and Niagara Falls Council meeting agendas, maps and presentations, regarding a proposed mixed development project known as the “Mont Rose at Niagara/Winery/Golf/Villas”, as well as a proposed development by the Thundering Waters Development Corp.


2.4 Background information report to the Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee on a proposed Regional Policy Plan amendment re: Niagara Falls World of Motorsports, 2009.

2.5 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Mediation Brief re: Oldfield Subdivision, Niagara Falls, 2012.

2.7 Document Book II, 1997-2014, n.d. Contains reports and other documents concerning policies and law regarding land development in Ontario. Also contains some specific information on Niagara Falls land development, including maps and a copy of the Niagara Falls Official Plan.

**Sub-series B: Ontario Municipal Board, 2003-2013**

2.8 Ontario Municipal Board document book re: proposed official plan amendment, Region of Niagara/City of Niagara Falls, 2003-2013. Contains proposed official plan amendment, correspondence, reports, and meeting minutes. (Book 1 of 2)

2.9 Ontario Municipal Board document book re: proposed official plan amendment, Region of Niagara/City of Niagara Falls, 2003-2013. Contains proposed official plan amendment, correspondence, meeting minutes, and reports. (Book 2 of 2)

2.10 Witness statements re: Ontario Municipal Board hearing on the proposed Fernwood Development Plan of Subdivision, August 11, 2006.

**Series III: Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1981-2006**


2.12 Ontario Municipal Board Motion Record in the matter of an appeal by John Paxton against the change by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake of the conditions of the draft plan approval of “The Settlement at St. Davids” subdivision, 2004-2006.

2.13 Paxton property documents, 1981-2006. Contains material related to the development of the Paxton property in St. Davids, which includes the historic Secord homestead and land that is part of the Niagara Escarpment. Materials include correspondence; workbooks from Niagara-on-the-Lake watershed plan public workshops; a site description of the property by D.J. Penwarden Appraisals Ltd.; a brief overview of activities to secure the Paxton Property from development; and a management plan for the Paxton Property put forward by John Paxton.

**Series IV: Niagara Region Reports and Documents, 1981-2018**


2.18 *Niagara Region Waste Management, 2018.* Contains memos and Waste Management Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

2.19 News clippings, 2005. Contains an article on Peter Grandoni, a founding member of PALS, and a notice of public meeting for an update of the Niagara Regional Tree Conservation By-Law.

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**Series V: Greater Golden Horseshoe Reports and Documents, 1985-2013**


2.21 *Overview of Environmental Conditions and Constraints: draft for consultation.* Niagara to GTA Corridor Planning and Environmental Assessment Study, June 2007.


2.24 Drainage, 1985-1987. Contains correspondence concerning the MacSweyn family and drainage issues on their farm; a news article about the advantages of municipal agricultural drains being installed by the province; comments on the Drainage Act and its Administration by Mariposa Farmers for Responsible Drainage; and a transcript of the Standing Committee on Procedural Affairs, Review of Agencies, Boards and Commissions, Ontario Drainage Tribunal, February 12, 1985.

Related material:
