



Municipal Heritage Committee Report

Report Number:	KLMHC2024-057
Meeting Date:	November 7, 2024
Title:	Doors Open 2024 Summary
Description:	Overview of Doors Open 2024
Author and Title:	Emily Turner, Economic Development Officer – Heritage Planning

Recommendations:

That Report KLMHC2024-057, **Doors Open 2024 Summary**, be received for information.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

The City of Kawartha Lakes has historically participated in Doors Open in order to help promote heritage in the community and showcase the unique heritage sites across the City. This event has historically been organized by a subcommittee of the Municipal Heritage Committee and supported by staff in Economic Development. In 2023, it was decided to hold Doors Open on a bi-annual basis, alternating every other year with the Osprey Heritage Awards. The award event was held in December 2023 meaning that Doors Open was scheduled for 2024. The event was planned and organized by the Outreach Subcommittee with staff support in Economic Development.

Doors Open 2024 took place on Sunday September 15 and focussed on 13 sites in Fenelon Falls, Bobcaygeon and Sturgeon Point, as well as one site in the hamlet of Bury's Green. The intention of locating the sites in these areas was to focus the event on the 150th anniversary of Fenelon Falls and the 125th anniversary of Sturgeon Point while ensuring that there was a reasonable driving distance between the sites. The event has used this format of focussing the event in a particular area of the City for a number of years and it has proven helpful for visitors who want to visit multiple sites.

This report provides a summary of the event including visitor numbers and budget, as well as feedback about the events and recommendations for 2026.

Rationale:

The following is a summary of the outcomes of Doors Open 2024 for the Committee's review.

Outreach Subcommittee

The event was organized this year by the Outreach Subcommittee with support from the Economic Development Officers for Heritage Planning and Curatorial Services. The subcommittee consisted of three Committee members and two City staff who met monthly between February and September 2024. The subcommittee worked with staff to identify and contact sites as provide direction for marketing and day of coordination. The subcommittee members also volunteered at different sites on the day of the event to ensure the event ran smoothly.

In the past, Doors Open has been coordinated by local historical societies, the now-defunct Kawartha Lakes Heritage Network and the Municipal Heritage Committee, or a combination of these groups. The past several Doors Open events have been

coordinated solely by the Municipal Heritage Committee with support from City staff. This has made event organization more streamlined and allowed the use of City communications resources for the event. Staff are recommending that this organizational structure continue for future events.

Visitor Numbers

The visitor numbers for 2024 were much higher than has been recorded in previous years. In total, 742 distinct visits were made across the 13 sites. It is not known how many visitors participated in the event as the number of sites each visitor goes to varies and is very difficult to track. However, with the passports that were turned in at each site, it is clear that a large number of visitors attended 3 or more sites as visitation to 3 sites was required to participate in the prize draw.

The visitation breakdown for the individual sites is as follows:

Site	Number of Visitors
Christ Anglican Church	44
Edgewood Dry Stone Wall	14
Boyd Heritage Museum	130
Sturgeon Point Walking Tour	52
Sturgeon Point Union Church	80
St. Peter's Anglican Church	34
Fenelon Falls United Church	30
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church	38
Maryboro Lodge	85
Fenelon Station Gallery	67
The Grove Theatre	47
Fenelon Generating Station	52
Kawartha Fire Station 22	69
Total:	742

Marketing and Promotion

The City's Communications team undertook a range of marketing initiatives for the event. These include significant social media posts, a press release and paper advertising including event postcards and postcards. A page on the City website was created for Doors Open along with the webpage on the main Doors Open Ontario website. An article was also written in the Lindsay Advocate. There was also additional

media pick up after the press release went out, including in Kawartha 411 and a blog for homeschoolers.

For paper advertising, 500 postcards were printed and distributed at the lead up to and during the event. The majority of these postcards were taken by community members and there were very few left over.

For digital advertising, City communications staff have provided a breakdown of online engagement on both the webpage for the event on the City's website as well as on social media which is attached to this report as Appendix A. The social media campaign included both posts to the City's social media as well as boosted content which is included in budget breakdown for the event below.

Event Passport

The Outreach subcommittee decided to try a new initiative this year and created an event passport for Doors Open. Visitors who attended three or more sites were able to have their passports stamped and they could return them to their final site for entry into a draw for three local prizes. 55 passports were returned and the prize draw was held.

Anecdotally, there were people who did not participate in the passport draw because they were either attending fewer than 3 sites or because they were not interested. Of the passports returned, visitors went to the following number of sites:

Number of Sites	Number of Passports Returned
3	17
4	18
5	6
6	9
7 or more	5

The passports collected demographic information (age) as well as the postal code of people who returned them. This information was not mandatory and most passports did not include this information. Of the passports returned, visitors reported the following demographics:

Age	Number of Visitors
Under 18	0

Age	Number of Visitors
19-29	0
30-39	2
40-49	3
50-59	3
60-69	6
70-79	8
80-89	3
90 and up	0
Not reported	30

Visitors reported being from the following locations:

Area and Postal Code	Number of Visitors
Kawartha Lakes	34
Durham Region	10
Peterborough City/County	5
Simcoe County	3
Peel Region	2
City of Toronto	2
York Region	1
Lanark County	1
Not reported	2

This information will assist in organizing future events to help with more targeting marketing and indicating areas where there is room for growth.

Volunteers

Most of the sites provided their own volunteers. Several sites still required additional volunteers from the Municipal Heritage Committee or a presence from City staff. With the additional volunteers from the Committee and City staff, all of the sites had sufficient volunteers for the day of the event. Volunteers provided information to visitors, counted visitor number, distributed passports and itineraries, and stamped and collected passports.

Partnerships

When Doors Open was initially discussed in early 2024, a number of potential partnerships were explored that might assist with the event. Staff had spoken to the Fenelon Falls District Chamber of Commerce, which was coordinating the Fenelon 150 events throughout the year, to partner on certain aspects of the event. This was a successful partnership as the Chamber assisted in promoting the event and provided promotional items for giveaways and prizes included Fenelon Falls 150 tote bags and Fenelon Falls photobooks for the draw prizes.

Staff had also been approached by the City of Peterborough regarding the possibility for collaborative marketing as the Peterborough event, which has historically taken place in May, was moved to September in 2023. This year, the two events took place back-to-back and it was discussed that it may make sense to market to people who were interested in participating in both events. Unfortunately, there were a number of staffing changes at the City of Peterborough and this joint marketing did not take place, despite initial discussions. However, staff feel that this may be an avenue worth exploring for future events to help reach a wider audience.

Budget Breakdown

In January 2024, the Committee approved a budget of \$3,000 to organize and run the Doors Open event. Half of this budget was allocated to the registration fee for the Ontario Heritage Trust which is \$1,695 (\$1,500 plus tax). The remainder was allocated for promotional materials, advertising and day of event expenses. The budget for this event and other Committee initiatives comes from the general Heritage Planning budget within Economic Development that supports the activities of the Committee as well as the heritage planning program at the City more broadly.

The budget breakdown for the event was as follows:

Budget Item	Cost (including tax)
Doors Open Ontario Registration Fee	\$1,695
Advertising and Printing	Digital: \$440 Paper: \$310
Passport Prizes	\$83.24
Event Supplies (stamps, volunteer buttons, etc.)	\$106.42
Total:	\$2,634.66

This budget did not include staff mileage which is calculated as a separate line item in the Heritage Planning budget and typically not broken down or allocated by event or project. Mileage costs were not included in the original \$3,000 budget approved by the Committee.

The actual expenses for the event fell well within the allocated budget and staff are recommending that a budget of \$3,000 be approved for the 2026 event, unless there are some specific known changes in costs, such as the registration fee from the Trust.

Ontario Heritage Trust

The Ontario Heritage Trust is the umbrella organization for the Doors Open event in Ontario and participating communities pay a registration fee to participate. The Trust sends out a feedback and statistics form for communities to fill out at the end of their event which staff have completed.

In the feedback form, staff noted that, during early discussions of organizing Doors Open this year, there had been questions from the Committee as to what happened with the registration fee and it would be helpful to know where this money went. Staff from the Trust replied to these comments and indicated to City staff that the funds from the registration fee went to broader marketing initiatives that the Trust did on behalf of the province-wide event, including the Doors Open Ontario website. The Trust indicated that it would send the statistics from its marketing to City staff to share with the Committee. These statistics will be shared with the Committee at its meeting, or, if they are not yet received, will be send to the Committee by email once they are received from the Trust.

Specific Feedback

There were a number of specific feedback items that were raised by the Outreach Subcommittee, volunteers and visitors. These include:

- The passports were very well received and should be included in future events.
- The advanced sign up worked well for both the Sturgeon Point Walking Tour and the tour of the Fenelon Falls Generating Station. However, there was a challenge with the program used for sign ups so that multiple people could sign up in one registration form so it was hard to regulate numbers. This will need to be addressed for future events.
- The walking tour was very well attended and walking tours should be sites for future events.

- In general, the marketing was identified as being much more positive this year than has been the case in the past. There were a couple of issues with third-party media pick up with incorrect information.
- Several visitors identified that it would have been helpful to have a map that they could either pick up or print off that identified where all the sites were. It was also suggested that a brochure with information about the event, the sites and a map would be helpful. This can easily be done for future events.
- Several of the sites remarked on how high their visitation numbers were and that they were pleased with the turnout for the event.

Next Event

The next Doors Open event is tentatively scheduled for September 2026, as 2025 will be an Osprey Heritage Awards year. Staff will bring forward a report discussing participating in Doors Open 2026 in January of that year, along with budget and the recommendation for the Outreach Subcommittee to continue to organize the event with staff support. At this time, the Committee will want to consider how it wants to allocate the available budget and what area of the City it would like to focus on.

Other Alternatives Considered:

There are no recommended alternatives.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

There are no financial or operational impacts as a result of the recommendations of this report. The costs for the event are part of the existing Heritage Planning budget and fell within the allocated budget for the event.

Consultations:

Outreach Subcommittee
Economic Development Officer – Curatorial Services

Attachments:

Appendix A – Doors Open Digital Marketing Results



Adobe Acrobat
Document

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