

Ms Darlene Plumley, CAO
Village of Merrickville-Wolford
317 Brock St W., Box 340
Merrickville, ON K0G 1N0

September 15, 2025

Dear Ms Plumley

I am writing to you in my role as President of the Friends of the Merrickville Turbine (FMT). We are a charitable organization established to preserve, maintain, and interpret one of Merrickville's most significant pieces of industrial heritage; namely, the turbine generator that has been on display for more than a decade as part of the Parks Canada's Industrial Heritage Display located adjacent to the OPG generating station on the bridge that crosses the Rideau River/Rideau Canal.

Historical Background

The turbine operated in the nearby power station from 1915 until 1991, providing electricity to factories on this Industrial Site and to the village of Merrickville itself, powered by the adjacent Rideau River waterfall. Recognizing the heritage value of this remarkable artifact, the Heritage Merrickville Foundation (HMF), together with Ontario Hydro and Parks Canada, arranged for its display on the Merrickville Industrial Ruins site.

- 1991 – Removed from the Generating Station and placed in storage by Parks Canada.
- 1993 – Relocated to its present site, with HMF funding for the construction of the plinth.
- 1994–1995 – Painted under the oversight of HMF.
- 2004 – Discussions initiated with Parks Canada regarding long-term care.
- 2011 – On the initiative of David Hammonds, the Friends of the Merrickville Turbine was formed to address deterioration and establish a sustainable stewardship plan.

Incorporation and Charitable Status

On March 3, 2012, the Ontario Historical Society incorporated the FMT as an Affiliated Member #9477, Ontario Corporation #001869322. On May 23, 2012, the Canada Revenue Agency approved our charitable status (registration #82835 8705 RR0001).

Objectives

The organization's objectives are to:

- a) own, research, restore, preserve, interpret, and maintain the turbine, governor, and generator—collectively known as the "Turbine"—which stands on Parks Canada land at the Merrickville Industrial Ruins;
- b) carry out activities supporting the preservation of the Turbine; and
- c) solicit funding to ensure its ongoing care.

Stewardship and Expenses

Since incorporation, the Friends have invested significant time and resources:

- 2013 – Sandblasting, environmental remediation, and repainting (\$29,606; supported by a Trillium Foundation grant of \$14,300).

- 2013 – Installation of protective fencing (\$6,780; supported by Valley Heartland).
- 2014 – Alloy Foundry signage (\$2,011.40; supported by a \$3,500 donation from OPG).
- Ongoing – Annual printing of information brochure (approx. \$75).

These efforts build on the foundational work of the Heritage Merrickville Foundation and demonstrate the Friends' long-standing commitment to preserving this artifact.

Request for Transfer

After more than a decade of stewardship, the Friends have reached a point where our aging membership must consider the long-term sustainability of this responsibility. While ongoing costs remain modest—Parks Canada maintains the grounds, the turbine is fenced, and the primary requirement is liability insurance—the Friends believe that municipal ownership offers the most secure path for preservation and interpretation.

At its meeting of August 14, 2025, the Village's Museum Services Board acknowledged the current difficulty faced by the Friends and indicated its willingness to provide support. Based on this encouragement a special meeting of the Friends was called on September 4 during which the following Motion was unanimously passed by the members present:

MOTION: That a request to the Village of Merrickville-Wolford Council be formulated to approve the transfer of ownership of the heritage artifact known as the Merrickville Turbine from its current owner (namely, the legal entity called the Friends of the Merrickville Turbine) to the Village of Merrickville-Wolford. In addition to the turbine-generator this transfer will include the following: the fence surrounding the current display (with lock and key), the concrete plinth upon which the artifact rests and all documentation relating to the display; e.g., the information brochure typically displayed/distributed at the site, the contents of the website: www.FriendsOfTheMerrickvilleTurbine.weebly.com, together with any other documentation deemed to be relevant. All costs associated with ownership (e.g. insurance), incurred subsequent to the transfer, will be assumed by the Village.

As President of the Friends of the Merrickville Turbine, I would very much appreciate your help in conveying this request for the transfer of ownership that is embedded in this Motion, to an appropriate meeting of the Merrickville-Wolford Council.

Closing

I thank you for your consideration. Approval of this request will ensure that this unique industrial artifact—an enduring reminder of Merrickville's industrial and cultural heritage—will remain preserved, interpreted, and celebrated for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Louis Birta

President, Friends of the Merrickville Turbine