

Committee to Establish a Middlesex County Archives

OFFICERS

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Secretary – Bev Hughes

Archivist –Carolynn
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MEMBERS

Ekfrid Community
Museum

Glencoe & District
Historical Society

Komoka Railway Museum

London & Middlesex
County Branch, Ontario
Genealogical Society

London & Middlesex
Historical Society

Lucan Area Heritage
Society

Middlesex Centre
Archives

Middlesex Centre
Historical Society

Mossley Post Heritage
& Citizenship Society

Strathroy Historical
Society

Wardsville Historical
Museum

Westminster Township
Historical Society

Representatives from all
Middlesex Communities

How Will the Municipalities and Clerks Benefit?

The Middlesex County Archivist would be able to help clerks create a Records Management Policy, if required, and ensure that the Retention Schedule is being followed. The County Archivist would also be able to work with the Municipal Clerks to transfer permanent records to the Archives and make them easily accessible through the Arrangement and Description of the records. The County Archivist would be able to assist with MFIPPA and/or Freedom of Information requests through quicker retrieval of information but only if the records are located in the Archives. It also gives easier access to the area public or researchers who need access to the records.

While some municipalities are transferring records to Laserfiche or other electronic databases, the hard copy of original records could be sent to the Middlesex County Archives. Sometimes it is essential to go back to the original hard copy to verify information. The original records would then be available and stored off-site in an environmentally controlled (EC)¹ facility. The longevity of the records would be extended. It also would make the records more accessible for researchers if they are available at the Archives. It would be beneficial to adopt the Archives as an extension of the Records Management process by providing the Archives' staff with access to Laserfiche. This would increase service to constituents and the public in general. One of the main benefits for Municipal staff is the removal of records from municipal offices or facilities to free up space. Placing these records in a centralised Middlesex County Archives with EC conditions, appropriate shelving, and staff who are trained in taking care of records and retrieval in a timely fashion, would make the records accessible.

A Middlesex County Archives would eliminate the cost to lower-tier municipalities and Middlesex County by having records stored in a centralized area. The benefit of the EC storage would ensure the security, retention and preservation of permanent records, as legislated by the Municipal Act 2001. S.O. 2001. Chapter 25.

¹ Environmentally controlled (EC) storage facilities are necessary for preserving records. The temperature must be 18-21 degrees Celsius, which is colder than an office environment. Relative humidity (RH) should be between 45-50%. If both elements are not met, mold can occur if humidity is too high, and paper can deteriorate if the temperature and RH are too low. Based on information received from several local municipalities, the municipal records are either on-site in their offices, in basements, in other municipal buildings or in the process of being digitized. If records are stored in facilities with a humidity of over 50%, the issue of mold is greater. If records are stored in a facility that is lower in humidity and temperature then there is a problem of paper degradation. If paper is stored in other areas that are not monitored, rodents and other pests can damage the records.