

Community and Operations Services Committee – May 10, 2023

Response to CS-22-48 being a Notice of Motion concerning the recognition of Historic Hamlets of Oshawa (All Wards)

That the Community and Operations Services Committee recommend to City Council:

Whereas on May 16, 2022 Community Services Committee recommended Item CS-22-48, being a Notice of Motion, to City Council:

“Whereas the City of Oshawa has placed signage recognizing the historical hamlets of Raglan and Columbus; and,

Whereas the historical hamlets in Oshawa represent a key feature of the development of our City and that legacy should not be lost; and,

Whereas the historical hamlets of Cedar Dale, Southmead and Westmount have no recognition and their legacy is in danger of being lost;

Therefore, that staff investigate and report back on the following:

1. The feasibility of placing signage, similar to that provided for Raglan and Columbus, that will recognize the historical hamlets of Cedar Dale, Southmead and Westmount; and,
2. Funding opportunities to support the construction and placement; and,
3. Potential locations on public lands or city boulevard for such signs.”; and,

Whereas at the May 24, 2022 meeting of Council, the Notice of Motion was referred to staff to consult with the Oshawa Historical Society for further comment; and,

Whereas the Oshawa Historical Society Archivist provided a report as it relates to the proposed historical hamlets referenced in the Notice of Motion, provided as Attachment 1, but did not provide further comment related to signage; and,

Whereas generally these types of requests are initiated through community interest in recognition of historical significance; and,

Whereas since there is little known about the history of Westmount and Southmead or their boundaries; and,

Whereas Westmount and Southmead were considered neighbourhoods as opposed to a hamlet or a village it is not feasible or appropriate to provide recognition; and,

Whereas the Archivist noted that Cedar Dale was listed along with Columbus and Raglan as a principle village within the township of East Whitby with a defined boundary

south of Bloor Street to Lake Ontario bounded by Park Road to the west and Wilson Road to the East, as shown in Attachment 2; and,

Whereas the Village of Columbus and the Village of Raglan are uniquely different from historical villages located within the urban boundary;

Whereas, staff reviewed the feasibility of recognizing the history of Cedar Dale as a village within the township of East Whitby and determined that accommodating road signs similar to the signs for Raglan and Columbus is not practical or feasible due to the size and space required within the right of way;

Whereas, if based on the Archivists report, there is a desire to recognize the former Village of Cedar Dale, it would be more appropriate to include "Historic Village of Cedar Dale" on the primary neighbourhood park signage within the designated area, as shown in Attachment 3;

Whereas, this would be over and above Parks Operations annual sign replacement program requiring additional Operating Budget of \$14,500 plus staff resources;

Therefore be it resolved that if, based on the Archivists report, there is a desire to recognize the former Village of Cedar Dale the following be endorsed by City Council:

1. That, pursuant to Item CO-23-29, the former Village of Cedar Dale should be recognized as a historically significant area; and,
2. That Operations Services staff be authorized to add "Historic Village of Cedar Dale" to the primary neighbourhood park signs within the area historically known as Cedar Dale; and,
3. That an additional \$14,500 be added to the 2024 Parks Operating budget for sign replacement.

HISTORIC HAMLETS OF OSHAWA



REPORT REGARDING CS-22-48

MARCH 3, 2023

BACKGROUND

The Oshawa Historical Society (OHS) was contacted to provide assistance to City of Oshawa staff with regards to Recommendation CS-22-48 from the Community Services Committee to City Council. In this recommendation, staff were asked to investigate the feasibility of placing signage recognizing the historical hamlets of Cedar Dale, Southmead and Westmount.

CEDAR DALE

The 1877 County of Ontario Atlas, Cedar Dale is listed along with Columbus, Raglan and Harmony, as one of the principle villages within the township of East Whitby.¹ The early recognition of this area as village has provided ample information on the development of the community.

Cedar Dale was located just south of what today is known as Bloor Street and was bounded by Park Road and Wilson Road with frontage to Lake Ontario. It was not a part of Oshawa until the early 1920s. Prior to this date, Cedar Dale was designated a “Police Village”, separate also from East Whitby Township.

Many local historians credit the creation of Cedar Dale to one man, A.S. Whiting. This rather noteworthy credit is given to Whiting because he chose to build his new manufacturing business south of the other industries found in the Oshawa area. Mr. Whiting even brought in people to work at his new factory from his home state of Connecticut. In fact, Whiting is even credited with naming Cedar Dale. The *Ontario Reformer* for Friday, May 7, 1873 credited Mr. Whiting for the existence of Cedar Dale. According to the article, it was “through the establishment and enterprise of the Cedar Dale Works” that Cedar Dale now exists. The plant not only brought work and thus income to the area, but it brought people to work at the plant and make their homes nearby. Whiting Avenue was home to many of the employees who came to the area to work for Mr. Whiting.

The 1877 County of Ontario Atlas contains a map of Cedar Dale. Cedar Dale is illustrated with the Town of Oshawa in the 1895 County of Ontario Atlas.²

WESTMOUNT

There is not a great deal of information available on the Westmount community. The earliest mention of Westmount can be found in the book *Historic Sketches of Oshawa*, published in 1921. Here the community is mentioned in reference to the first Methodist Church building which was constructed in Westmount at the head of Nasseau Street. The building was open in 1841. It is unclear if the area was known as Westmount at the time of the church’s construction or if the author is noting that location due to the year that the book was authored.³

¹ Beers, J.H. and Co. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Ontario*. Toronto: J.H. Beer & Co. 1877.

² Goad, Chas. *Atlas of Ontario County*. Toronto: Chas. Goad. 1895

³ Kaiser, T.E. *Historic Sketches of Oshawa*. Oshawa: The Reformer Printing & Publishing CO. 1921.

According to the Olive French Manuscript: “After World War I, the Westmount district as it was called began to build up and families with children settled there.” At this time, children in the Westmount community were permitted to attend Centre Street School but it quickly became overcrowded. Residents in the district worked to have a new school built and by 1925 the Westmount School was constructed.⁴

SOUTHMEAD

The only information available on Southmead relates to the park. The neighbourhood is located in the historic community of Cedar Dale.

⁴ French, Olive. Unpublished manuscript. Oshawa Museum: Oshawa Historical Society. 1980.

Attachment 2: Approximate Boundary of Historic Village of Cedar Dale



--- Approximate Boundary of the Historic Village of Cedar Dale

■ Neighbourhood Parks



CO-23-29 Attachment 3: Park Sign Concept - Historic Recognition

Proposed Park Signage:

- Lake Vista Park
- Southmead Park
- Stone Street Park
- Conant Park
- Cordova Valley Park
- Snowbird Park
- Wellington Park
- Lakewoods Park
- Fenelon/Venus Park

