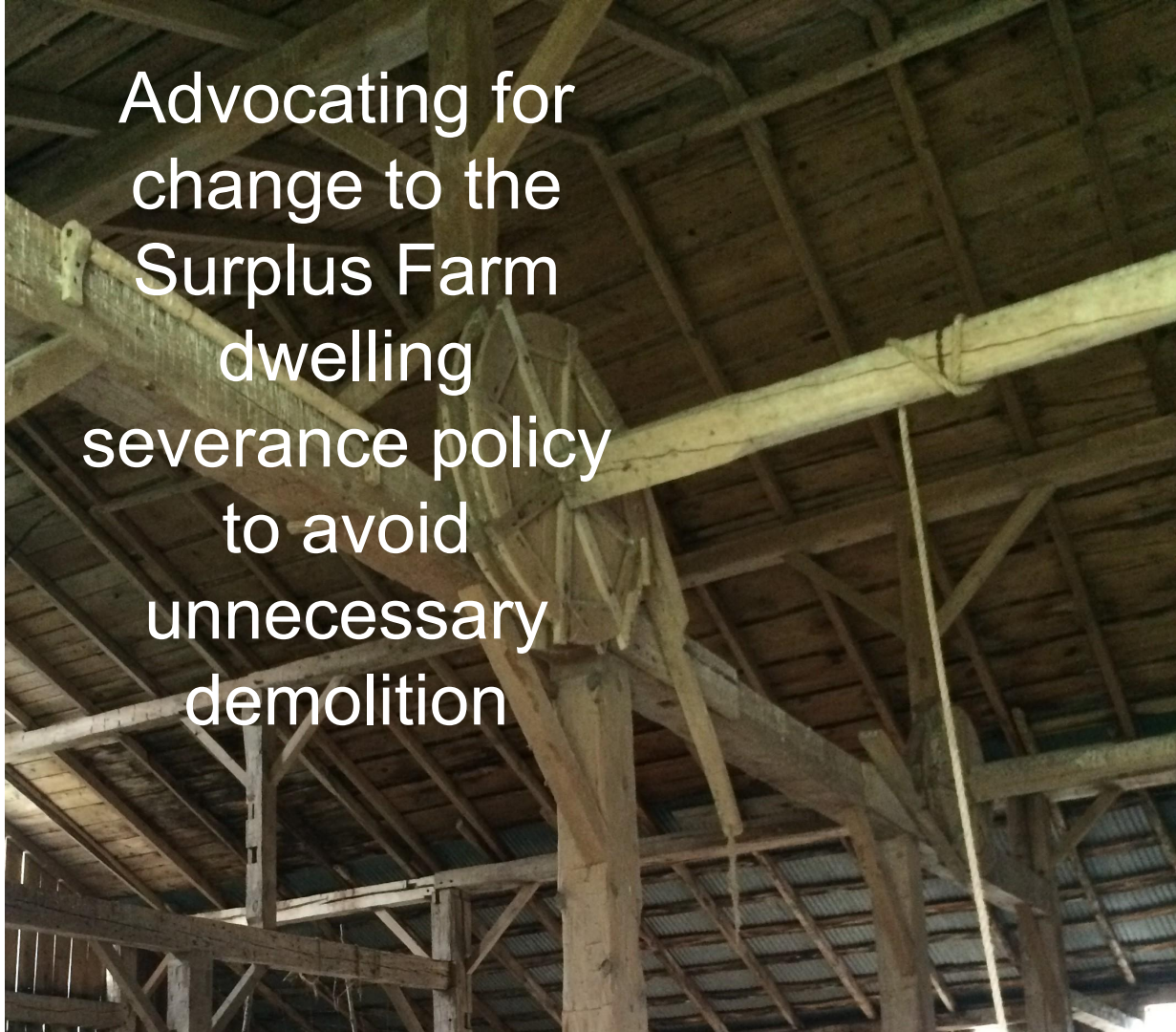
Ontario BARN Preservation

Protecting our Heritage Barns



Advocating for change to the Surplus Farm dwelling severance policy to avoid unnecessary demolition

Who is Ontario Barn Preservation?

Not-for-profit started in 2019 to advocate for our heritage barns

We are a membership driven organization with a board of directors.

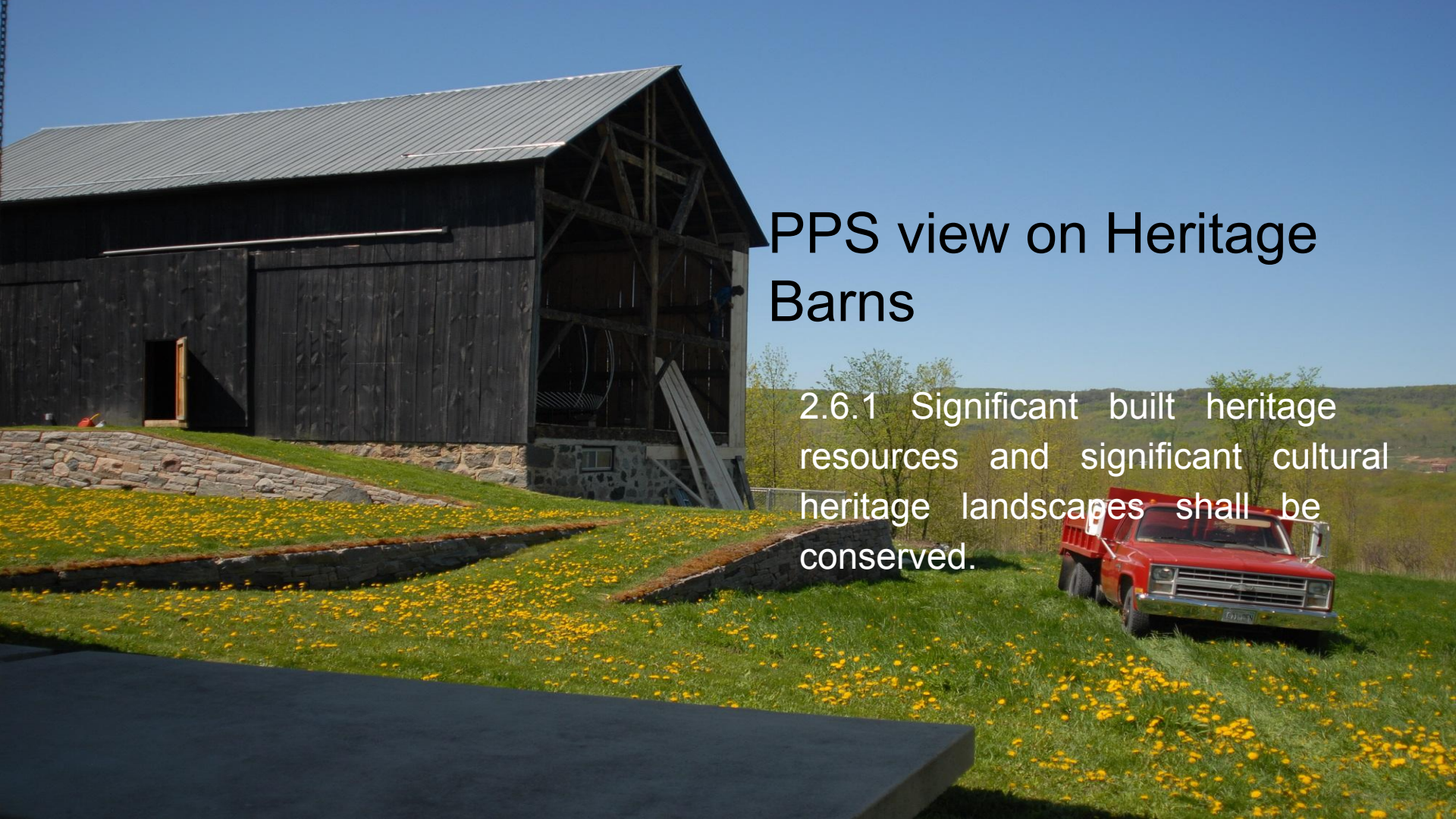
We do not advocate for mandatory preservation, but encourage voluntary preservation, reuse, and restoration where possible & provide resources to support those

Number of initiatives including a barn directory for Ontario,contractor/engineers/architect directory, blog resources, research, and advocacy

www.ontarobarnpreservation.com

PPS view on Heritage Barns

2.6.1 Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.



Although heritage barns may not have the same functionality they once did, we believe they are an important part of Ontario's cultural history and rural landscape.

- landmarks in the countryside and our rural scenery
- potential to be reused and repurposed
- Value-added opportunities for agritourism
- Reuse of buildings is more environmental
- historic value for research of vernacular architecture and cultural history
- convey an important sentiment to our urban counterparts about the hardworking farm community
- useful for small farm operations
- Contribute to rural economic growth and development





You have influence!

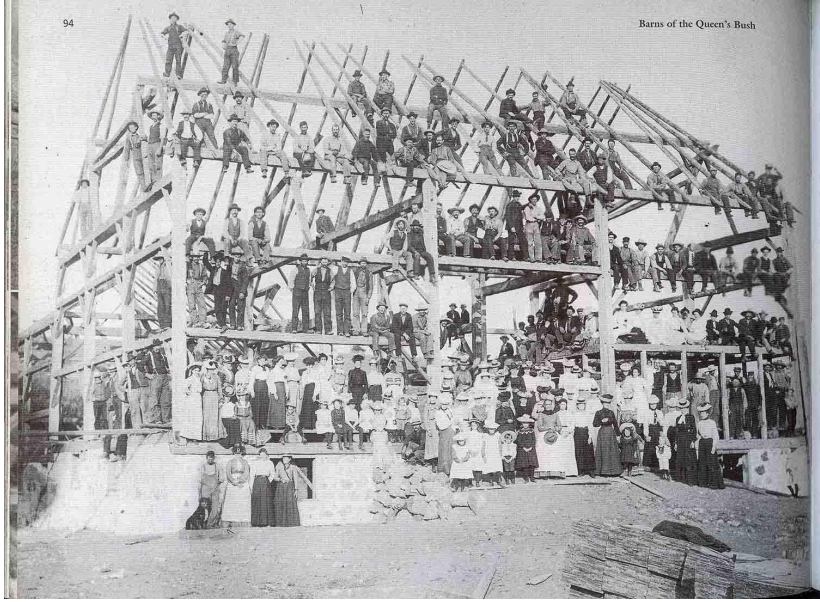


Surplus farm dwelling severance policy causing unnecessary demolition of our heritage barns

We researched with municipalities, planners, architect, and engineering some of the key policies of Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2014), OMAFRA and Ontario Building Code regulations which creates difficulties in the conservation of barns.

This summer a letter to all the municipalities in Ontario to consider making changes. We hope these solutions from other municipalities have implemented might be considered in your municipality.

Policy Item #1



"New land uses, including the creation of lots, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae." –Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2.3.3.3

<u>Barns retained on the farmhouse lot</u>

- Already in compliance with MDS regulations
- lot where used to house animals have a plan for manure removal either on their own property or in agreement with another land owner as per the OMAFRA Nutrient Management Plan/Strategy Guidelines.
- Although the capacity of these heritage barns is generally above 5 NU, in practice it is unlikely an owner would exceed this number because owners of this type of property are likely to only have a hobby-size operation
- Ideal owners, lots for hobby farm, CSA, farmgate, estate res., adaptive reuse, and preservation strategies

Policy Item #1

"New land uses, including the creation of lots, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae." –Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2.3.3.3



Barns retained on the retained agriculture lot

- Typically in immediate violation of MDS separation requirements as the related farmhouse is now on a separate property
- Due to the unsuitability of the barn to house animals heritage barns could hold 30Nutirent units or more
- These barns are often in the way of cropping
- Barns on the retained agriculture lots have limited alternative options other than demolition.

Policy Item #1



"New land uses, including the creation of lots, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae."
–Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2.3.3.3

Possible Solutions

- Retain barn on the farmhouse lot with limits on animal capacity (IE 1.2NU/hectare) or maximum of 4NU
- Zoning states that lots must comply with OMAFRA manure management guidelines
- Retain barn on farmhouse lot and make the barn " un-reasonably capable of housing animals" (OMAFRA), by removing water connection, stalls, etc. making the barn a shed/accessory building only
- Avoid severing the barn on the retained agriculture land (almost guarantees demolition)
- Where barn must be retained on agriculture land, make it " un-reasonably capable of housing animals" (OMAFRA), thus making accessory building and not required to comply with MDS

Policy Item #2

A residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, provided that: "1. the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services;" - PPS 2.3.4.1c



- This almost always forces the barn to be retained on the agriculture lot, and thus nearly guarantees its demise. See policy item #1

Possible Solutions

- use a minimum and maximum lot size rather than the above strict guideline to determine the lot line
- review each severance on a case by case basis to determine the best collection of buildings
- Provide language to "consider heritage buildings" in the site assessments for severance
- "Reasonable Use Assessment" be done to ensure that the lot is adequately sized for septic systems. Rule of thumb 2 acres minimum for a septic system install.
- Allows opportunities for small farm holdings, start-up farms/CSAs and other agritourism uses

Policy Item #3



Designation of severed lot to be zoned "non-farm" and permitted uses as "non-farm" dwelling

- "non-farm" designation creates an incompatible use, encouraging non-farming residents, but it also limits the possible use of the small land for small scale farm operations within Prime Agriculture Zones.
- "Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations." PPS

Possible Solutions

- Encourage a more diversified use of the new farmhouse lot, this increases chance of barn preservation, restoration and reuse.
- Provide separate provisions within your existing rural or agricultural designations. For example; Provisions for lots larger than 10 acres, and lots less than 10acres.

Policy Item #4

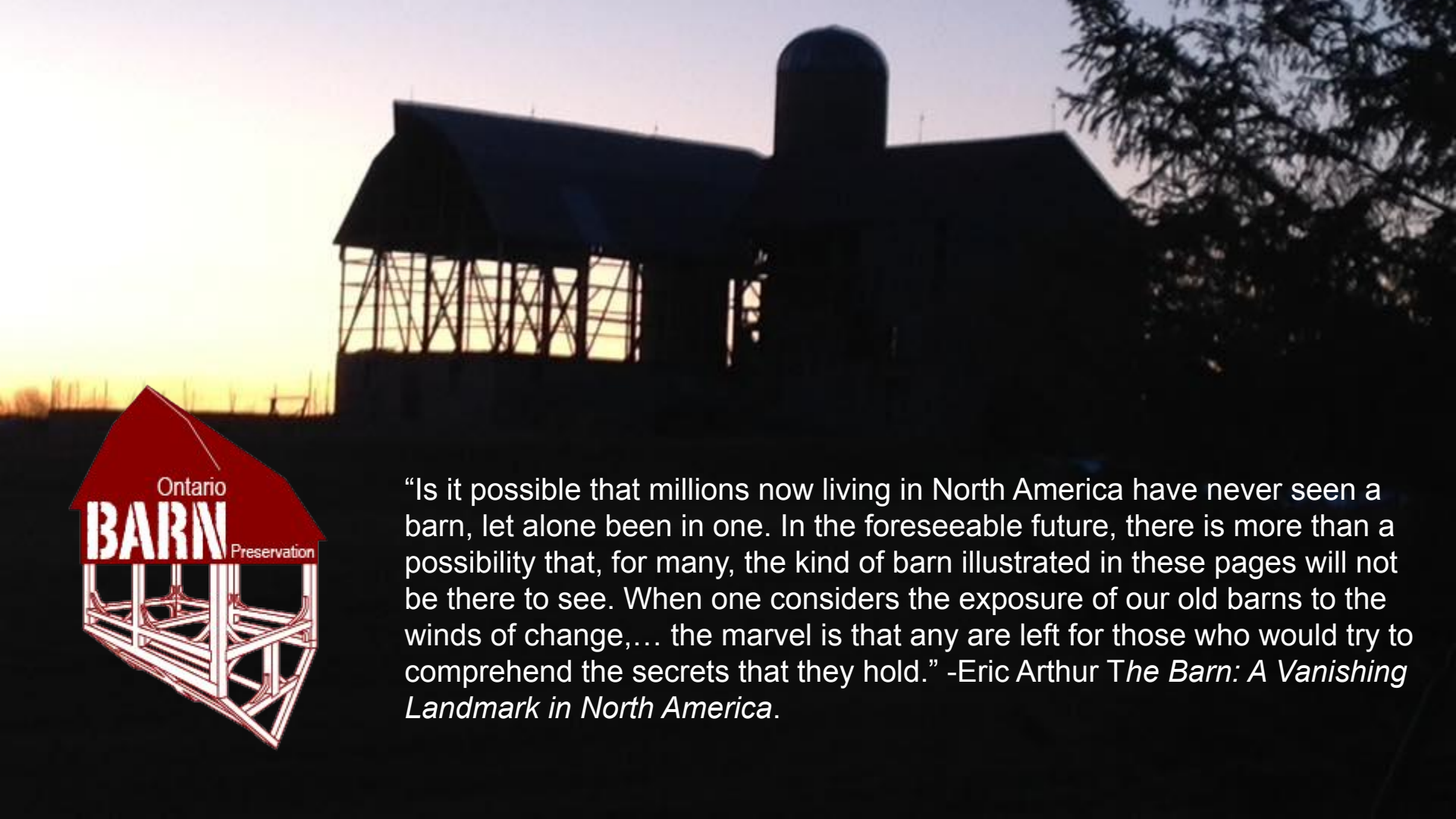
Mandatory Change of Use for the building to not permit livestock.



- There is no Building Code differentiation for livestock Ag vs. shed ag building
- Change of Use to anything other than agriculture is costly, and preventative for most people to save the barn, and would result in certain demolition
- Limit livestock in agricultural areas is limiting possible uses of the property and contribution to the rural economy. Limits type of ownership to non-farming residents (opens conflict)

Possible Solutions

- Make the barn “un-reasonably capable of housing animals” (OMAFRA), by removing water connection, stalls, etc. making the barn a shed/accessory building only.
- Leave door open for future change of uses if the barn is still standing!



Ontario BARN Preservation

“Is it possible that millions now living in North America have never seen a barn, let alone been in one. In the foreseeable future, there is more than a possibility that, for many, the kind of barn illustrated in these pages will not be there to see. When one considers the exposure of our old barns to the winds of change,… the marvel is that any are left for those who would try to comprehend the secrets that they hold.” -Eric Arthur T*he Barn: A Vanishing Landmark in North America*.