

RECREATION, PARKS, TOURISM AND CULTURE FREE MEETING HOUSE RENTAL POLICY

Preamble – History of the Free Meeting House

The Free Meeting House was built in 1821, and is one of Moncton's oldest standing public buildings. It was constructed in the style of a New England Meeting House without steeple, bell or cornerstone. Its purpose was to serve as a home for all religious denominations until such time as individual groups could raise the money required to build their own churches.

The historic building was constructed mainly through the efforts of Ichabod Lewis, a Loyalist from Poughkeepsie New York, and Solomon Trites, whose grandfather Jacob Trites Senior's land grant contained a large portion of modern Moncton. These two men, together with elder Joseph Crandall, a Baptist missionary, felt a great need for a place of worship opened to all faiths.

Land containing half an acre, more or less, was purchased from William and Hannah Steadman for 20 pounds sterling and was deeded over to Lewis and Trites. The deed was prepared by Malcolm Wilmot, the local Justice of the Peace and was signed in his presence May 24, 1821. The land was promptly cleared and the building constructed, largely with free materials and donated labor. Elder Crandall conducted the Dedication Service on September 7, 1821.

The south and rear of the site became a burial ground for the little settlement. The oldest stone, that of John Charters, is dated 1816. The most recent is dated 1876, being that of an infant Merrill Brown.

In November 1838, 600 men of the 65th Regiment arrived from Saint John, en route to Shediac, there to take ship for Quebec. Since no other public building existed, the Free Meeting House became the Orderly Room for the troops encamped nearby.

Also of interest is the fact that on August 22nd, 1876, Bishop Cummins from New York City conducted the first Confirmation Service of the Reformed Episcopalian Church in Canada.

In 1964, city council took over the title of the building and repairs were carried out. The Free Meeting House was rededicated as a memorial to early settlers on September 25th, 1966, and the church together with the graveyard declared a national historic site.

The latest restoration of the Free Meeting House took place from 1987 to 1990 and was the first of its kind to have been undertaken by the City of Moncton. In June 1990, the Free Meeting House was designated a National Historic Site.

1.0 Policy Statement

The Free Meeting House Rental Policy reflects the strong desire of the City of Moncton to integrate public access by having the building and grounds open community citizens as well as non-profit and corporate groups. The users shall utilize the rental spaces for a wedding, religious service, meeting, workshop or special function.

2.0 Definition

“Non-profit group” means a corporation, society, association, organization or body organized and operated exclusively for social welfare, civic improvement, pleasure or recreation or for any purpose except profit, no part of the income of which is payable to, or otherwise available for the personal benefit of any proprietor, member or shareholder thereof.

3.0 General

The use of the House by citizens, non-profit groups and corporate groups is a privilege and should be considered as such by the users. Therefore, Recreation, Parks, Tourism and Culture / Moncton Museum will determine which users and type of activities will be permitted in the House or grounds, and RPTC’s decision is final. Museum staff must approve all rental requests.

Any requests to use the Free Meeting House outside the museum hours will be evaluated on staff availability. The museum hours are Monday to Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Any changes or additions to the interior or exterior of the house or grounds such as posting signs, mounting flags, displays in windows, moving furniture, attaching or removing items from walls, pews, windows, etc. are strictly prohibited without prior written approval of Museum staff.

It should be noted that the Free Meeting House is wheelchair accessible. A parking space is reserved in the Moncton Museum parking lot and a sidewalk gives access to the Free Meeting House.

4.0 Rental of House and Grounds

4.1 Spaces available for rent:

As per fire marshal orders, all users must comply with the following standards. The Free Meeting House capacity at one time is a MAXIMUM of 100 people. A suggested comfortable seating capacity at one time is a maximum of 80 people.

4.2 Fees

4.2.1 Wedding package

May 1 to September 30

Wedding package includes 1 hour rehearsal + ceremony \$150.00 plus HST

October 1st to April 30

Wedding package includes 1 hour rehearsal + ceremony \$200.00 plus HST

- *Payment is due in full at time of booking.*
- *The Free Meeting House must be decorated at the time of the rehearsal or during the museum regular business hours (Monday to Saturday between 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Sunday between 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.)*
- Recommendations:
 - *Flower arrangements in containers can be put on the floor or windowsills for decorating.*
 - *Ornaments can be hung from existing nails on mid-windows. It is strictly prohibited to add new nails.*
 - *If using pew markers, use shower hook rings only to clip on.*
 - *When decorating, the following is NOT permitted:
Candles, confetti, electrical tape, mac tac, poster putty, nails or tacks of any kind*

The Free Meeting House is a National Historic Site. Please respect these regulations in view of preserving this building.

4.2.2 Group rental

Hourly rates:

Non-profit group \$30.00 plus HST Corporate group \$60.00 plus HST

- *Payment is due in full at time of booking.*

4.3 Payment of Rental Fee:

- a) Bookings will be done through the Recreation, Parks, Tourism and Culture Department on the 3rd floor of City Hall and online at www.moncton.ca/heritage. Payment is due in full at time of booking.
- b) All cheques for rental payments must be made out to the Moncton Museum. Payment

can be made via regular mail at Recreation, Parks, Tourism and Culture Department Att: Cheryl Coates 655 Main Street, Moncton, N.B. E1C 1E8 or in person at the Moncton City Hall 3rd floor from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

5.0 Responsibilities of the User group

a) Materials and equipment:

Museum staff must grant approval for materials such as televisions, VCRs, projectors, etc. that are brought into the building. This will ensure that the preservation of the building is maintained to its current condition. All electronic equipment must be in good condition and must be CSA approved.

b) Preservation of the House:

The user group must ensure the following:

- i) To ensure the building is kept in good condition, we encourage all users to clear their footwear from snow, water or mud at the front door.
- ii) Food and/or beverages are strictly prohibited in the Free Meeting House at any time. Special permission may be granted for use of the Moncton Museum lobby outside museum business hours as approved by Museum staff. Food and/or beverages are prohibited in all gallery areas of the Moncton Museum unless prior approval is granted. The User group must provide their own coffee maker, dishes, utensils, supplies, etc. for use in the museum lobby.
- iii) The user group is responsible to clean the rental space to its original condition. For larger functions in the building, janitorial services are available and the cost of this service will be calculated based on the amount and type of cleaning required.
- iv) Smoking is strictly prohibited anywhere on the premises including outdoors.

c) Events at the House:

The City of Moncton has a By-Law Relating to the Prevention of Excessive Noises within the City and it states “No person may make a noise likely to cause a public nuisance or otherwise disturb the inhabitants of the City of Moncton”. However, an application can be made to the Council of the City of Moncton for an exemption to the Noise By-Law. The tenants are responsible to consult with Museum staff to assess whether or not an exemption to the By-Law is required. It should be noted that the application must be made in writing to the City Clerk not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the date on which the event is to be held.

6.0 Security Procedure

- i) It is the responsibility of the user group to communicate with the museum staff upon arrival and departure of the Free Meeting House to ensure granted access to the building.