



Edmonton Heritage Council Report, November 19th, 2009

The concept of the Edmonton Heritage Council (EHC) emerged in community consultations held by the Edmonton Arts Council during the creation of the *Art of Living* 10-year cultural plan for the City of Edmonton.

The foundations of that concept were expressed in the Art of Living as the creation of the Edmonton Heritage Council "to unify and support the heritage community, give it an advocacy voice and develop programs that are of benefit to the heritage community and through this stimulate the interests of Edmontonians in heritage. The creation of an Edmonton Heritage Council will result in a clear collective identity and voice for heritage in Edmonton, will ally heritage with other comparable communities and organizations in the city and will increase the general awareness of Edmonton's heritage through advocacy, awards and education. It will also provide general support to all Edmonton and region heritage organizations, individuals and activities."

Edmonton City Council adopted the *Art of Living* in 2008 implementing the first recommendation in the heritage section of the plan by creating the Edmonton Heritage Council. In the City's 2009 budget, new operating funds for the EHC were allocated through the Community Services Department.

In addition to funding, the City has nurtured the development of the Heritage Council through the support of senior staff in the Department of Community Services and the Department of Planning and Development including Rob Smyth, Michael Payne, Heather McRae, Bryan Monaghan, Robert Geldart and David Holdsworth.

The Edmonton Arts Council provided shared resources, support and mentorship; the Edmonton Historical Board provided guidance and support.

In April 2009, a Steering Committee was formed with a mandate to:

- refine the vision, mission and mandate of the Edmonton Heritage Council
- develop governance documents and structures
- undertake outreach and communication to the heritage community
- develop a program plan overview that will consider types of programs and program delivery methods that may be used by the Heritage Council.

That Steering Committee consisted of:

Bob Caldwell, Associate Director, Long Range Planning, University of Alberta

Catherine Cole, Principal Consultant, Catherine C. Cole & Associates

Linda Collier, Director, Queen Alexandra History Centre

Lynn Fogwill, Alberta Genealogical Society

Robert Geldart, Senior Heritage Planner, Heritage Resources Management Program, City of Edmonton

Dr. Zohra Husaini, Educator, writer, researcher and human rights activist

Wendy Luther (Chair), Edmonton Historical Board

Jim Marsh, Editor-in-chief, *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, creator of Historywire.ca and FYICanada.ca

Heather McRae, Branch Manager, Strategic Services, City of Edmonton Community

Dr. Michael Payne, City Archivist, City of Edmonton

Lori Sokoluk, Executive Member, Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (EAUAC)

Virginia Stephen, Executive Director, Liberal Studies, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta

Dr. Frances Swyripa, Professor of History, University of Alberta

Crystal Willie, Operations Director, Alberta Museums Association

The Steering Committee, chaired by Wendy Luther, held seven meetings of the committee as a whole and numerous meetings in sub-committees.

The executive Committee consisted of the Chair supported by:

- Catherine Cole, Vice President
- Linda Collier, Secretary – Treasurer
- Michael Payne, City of Edmonton

The Steering Committee organized itself into three sub-committees: governance, communications and outreach, program.

The Governance Subcommittee developed:

- Objects, bylaws, program descriptions, vision-mission-mandate statements
- Board policies on membership, governance, staff relationships as well as draft statements for other policies
- Provincial incorporation as a not for profit society and application to Canada Revenue Agency for charitable status.

The Communications and Outreach Subcommittee;

- Development of guiding principles for a communications strategy
- Website <edmontonheritage.ca>
- Visual identity
- Brochure
- Membership and nominations drive
- Development of contact list

The Program Subcommittee developed or made:

- Guidelines for program development
- Historian Laureate program with the Edmonton Historical Board
- *Roar of the Rings* curling exhibit
- Beginning of database on heritage programming in the Edmonton region
- Preliminary plans for a major community symposium in 2010

An office in the Prince of Wales Armouries was established; staff was hired including:

- David Ridley – Program Manager
- Mary Oakwell – Administrative Officer
- John Mahon – seconded part-time from the Edmonton Arts Council as Interim Executive Officer.

Now, at the end of 2009, the Edmonton Heritage Council is about to become fully active as a membership driven organization. It is an exciting time for heritage in our city. The vision of the Edmonton Heritage Council is of a place where heritage is understood and valued by all members of the community as an integral part of life. Heritage is the legacy of our past, informing our present, and shaping our future and becomes a positive influence in shaping our community.

The Edmonton Heritage Council, like the Edmonton Arts Council, is primarily a support organization to the heritage community. It supports the work of individuals and organizations that:

- research, preserve, protect and present Edmonton's unique heritage
- promote an understanding of how this distinct place and community came to be
- engage with the past in planning for the future.

The mandate of the Edmonton Heritage Council is to:

- provide a forum for analyzing, discussing and sharing heritage issues in Edmonton
- advocate for a vibrant heritage community and heritage programs that benefit all Edmontonians
- unify Edmonton's heritage community and give it a voice
- promote the awareness and development of effective, informed and recognized

heritage principles and practices.

When we see:

- the committed and informed participation of our citizens in heritage
- the importance of heritage in education, and
- support of heritage by government and business;

we will know we are achieving the mandate of the Edmonton Heritage Council.

Submitted by John Mahon, Interim Executive Officer, Edmonton Heritage Council
November 19th, 2009