

This meeting of the Heritage Toronto Board was held on Sept 14, 2022, from 6:00-7:30 pm at St. Lawrence Hall (157 King St. East, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Toronto).

PRESENT:

Liza Chalaidopoulos (Chair)	Christopher Castellano
Dilys Chan	Lori Davison
Anne Deck	David Ecclestone
Martin Green	Peter Ignazi
Sandy Kedey	John McAlister
Joel Peters	Aaron Sanderson
Sarah Watson	

REGRETS:

Councillor Mike Colle  
Bradley Evoy  
Councillor Paula Fletcher  
Jeff Junke  
Suzanne Kavanagh  
James Lane  
Gretchen Mangahas  
Sanah Rizvi  
Colin Smillie

ALSO PRESENT:

Victoria Atteh, Programming Coordinator  
Allison Bain, Executive Director  
Laura Carlson, Manager, Public Programs  
Heather Kingdon, Operations Coordinator  
Kristen McLaughlin, Plaques Coordinator  
Vanessa Vigneswaramoorthy, Social  
Media and Digital Content Coordinator

## **A. OPENING REMARKS, AGENDA, AND MINUTES**

### **1. Call to Order**

Liza Chalaidopoulos called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

### **2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory**

Ms. Chalaidopoulos made an Indigenous land acknowledgement to start the meeting.

### **3. Introduction and Opening Remarks by Chair**

Ms. Chalaidopoulos welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Anne Deck who recently joined the Board. Ms. Deck introduced herself.

Staff and board members took turns introducing themselves as it was the first time since 2019 that the board was meeting in person.

Ms. Chalaidopoulos announced that Leslie Thompson has resigned from the board. She expressed thanks to Ms. Thompson for all her help and expertise over the years in moving forward many of the agency's initiatives. She noted that she would pass on board members' thanks to Ms. Thompson in an email.

Ms. Bain explained that once the City is informed of her resignation there would be an open call for submissions. The seat will likely be filled early 2023.

### **4. Approval of Agenda**

**HT 22-13: APPROVAL OF AGENDA** for the September 14, 2022 Board Meeting of Heritage Toronto. **(carried)**

Moved by Martin Green, seconded by Aaron Sanderson, and approved unanimously.

### **5. Declarations of Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

### **6. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Board Meeting**

**HT 22-14: APPROVAL OF MINUTES** of the meeting of the board of Heritage Toronto held July 14, 2022. **(carried)**

Moved by Joel Peters, seconded by Sandy Kedey, and approved unanimously.

## **B. CONSENT AGENDA**

### **HT 22-15: APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**(carried)**

Moved by Lori Davison, seconded by Peter Ignazi, and approved unanimously.

## **C. REPORTS**

### **1. CHAIR OF THE BOARD**

Ms. Chalaidopoulos updated the board on the Executive Compensation review that was completed earlier in 2022. She noted that there will likely be a delay in obtaining information on the next steps, as the City is going to do a deeper dive on the matter. The consultants will reconnect with Heritage Toronto and hopefully information will be finalized in 2023.

Martin Green noted the agency's Strategic Plan and the importance of the Board to ensure the Plan informs how the organization moves forward. Mr. Green asked committees to consider the strategic priorities in their discussions by asking: How are we doing? What have we done to implement these priorities? What can we do more of to implement these priorities? Mr. Green noted he would be happy to discuss the Strategic Priorities in further detail and board members were encouraged to reach out to him with questions.

### **2. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Ms. Bain noted the year's operations are proceeding largely as planned. However, as restoring the agency's audiences and revenues to pre-pandemic 2019 levels has been slower than projected, the agency is making operational decisions to ensure financial sustainability.

Ms. Bain explained that the Manager of Community Engagement position has not yet been filled. Instead, the charity will use this money to support managers, by extending the Programs Assistant position to year-end, and hiring a Development Coordinator.

Ms. Bain noted that Sanah Rizvi is developing a work plan to update all of the charity's human resource policies. Staff have also reached out to various organizations regarding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion training. As this will be paid for using a federal grant, it must be completed by March 2023.

### **3. PROGRAMS COMMITTEE**

Victoria Atteh gave an overview of her equity project which is centred around Toronto's Little Jamaica neighbourhood.

Kristen McLaughlin gave an update on plaques, noting it is the busiest time of the year in terms of manufacturing and installation. Currently, there are 24 plaques in varying stages of production and an additional three Toronto Historical Board plaques that are being updated and replaced.

Notable highlights include the Underground Railroad Restaurant plaque unveiling that took place at St. Lawrence Hall in mid-August, as well as the Dave Bookman plaque unveiling held at the Horseshoe Tavern, which was partnered with radio station Indie 88. Both events had great turnouts from partnered individuals and received coverage from various media outlets.

Ms. Chalaidopoulos asked how people are notified of a plaque installation.

Ms. McLaughlin responded that currently, plaque installations are mentioned in the monthly e-newsletter, and sometimes receive mention on social media as part of either the Plaque Friday series, or as part of another related post. She noted that they are open to other ideas and working with the social media coordinator to see if there are other avenues for opportunity.

John McAlister suggested that the agency may want to consider giving more attention to plaque unveilings and leveraging interest from audiences. He noted that it seemed like there was a missed opportunity here to increase our visibility.

Mr. Sanderson asked about the feasibility of increasing plaque production and, hence, revenues. Ms. McLaughlin responded that the majority of plaques produced are now enamel which generate more revenue than bronze plaques,

Ms. Bain clarified that increasing plaque production would not necessarily increase net position as plaque expenses, when staffing costs are factored in, exceed revenues. She noted an analysis of the plaques programs is a focus for 2023.

Joel Peters inquired about the cost of materials and Ms. McLaughlin explained the different materials and expenses.

Laura Carlson updated the Board on planning for the Heritage Toronto Awards and announced the host had been confirmed as CBC's Kelda Yuen. She noted that applications to be hosted are being accepted from Emerging Historians. Ms. Carlson thanked Board members Anne Deck and David Ecclestone for their work as Jury Chairs.

Ms. Carlson gave an update on tours, noting that 45 out of 57 public tours have been presented. The highest registration numbers have been on loudspeaker tours, as opposed to fee based headset tours. The *Saving Chinatown* tour was very popular and will be one of the stars of the season alongside *Creating Toronto* and *Healthcare Legacies*.

Ms. Carlson noted the challenges in rebuilding tour audiences. Although tour offerings were restored to pre-pandemic levels, there have been fewer participants. The agency is considering bringing back bus tours, which were always a favourite in the past, and also considering how to partner with the City and take part in existing events such as Taste of the Danforth or farmer's markets. Ms. Carlson noted that she is very interested in board feedback on the tours program.

Mr. McAlister asked whether there was a follow-up email that is sent to attendees after each tour. Ms. Carlson responded that an email including a link to a tours survey does get sent out to participants after each event.

Mr. Green asked whether the 1,100 attendance figure represented unique individuals or total tour participants. Ms. Carlson responded that the number refers to total tour attendees.

Mr. Green asked whether more could be done in the off-season such as self-guided or audio tours. Mr. McAlister added that if we tried this method, and it was successful, perhaps there is opportunity for sponsorships. Ms. Carlson noted that the *Creating Toronto* audio tour on the Heritage Toronto website is in a similar style and did have a sponsor attached.

Mr. Peters expressed praise for Ms. Atteh's Equity Initiative project, noting that the neighbourhood deserves more attention and is under a great deal of stress due to construction and other changes happening in the area.

Mr. Peters also noted that thought should be given to resource allocations rather than just investing in tours that are niche. He suggested that there are a number of other money-making tours that could run throughout the downtown core.

Ms. Carlson answered that there are four tours that are very popular that run almost every year – one of which is *Creating Toronto*. These tours do attract a core demographic – attendees who return each year. There needs to be a balance between offering new tours and bringing back core popular ones.

Mr. Ecclestone asked whether the agency knows the demographics of tour participants. Ms. Carlson responded that there are demographic questions on the tours survey. Most participants are residents of the Greater Toronto Area.

Mr. Ecclestone suggested that there may be a way to target audiences through partnering with hotels. Ms. Bain agreed with the ideas as the agency did hire a consultant to analyze revenue-generating avenues and the report concluded that partnering with hotels would not contribute positively to the bottom line. Previously, the agency had spent approximately \$10k on staff time and brochure distribution to hotels which did not balance out in increased revenue. Mr. Peters requested that the report be circulated.

Dilys Chan suggested that partnering with local businesses and offering experiential partnerships might be an avenue for consideration. This would be a good chance to create engaging social media posts as well and generate interest. Ms. Carlson agreed and noted the key is to find right kind of experience that works well in conjunction with tours. For example, in 2022, a photography tour led by a professional photographer was very successful.

Ms. Chan inquired about factors which led to popular tours. Ms. Carlson explained that there were a number of factors at play. *Saving Chinatown* has always been a popular tour, there is clearly continued interest in the Chinatown neighbourhood and it helped that there was an expert in the field leading the tour who is very well-connected in the community. As for *Creating Toronto*, many tourists explore the St.

Lawrence Market neighbourhood and people are always drawn to it. Less is known about why the *Healthcare Legacies* tour was successful although participation significantly dropped when there was a service fee for the audio headset presentation.

Sarah Watson asked how financially challenging it is to hire experts to lead or develop tours. Ms. Carlson expressed that the agency is very lucky to have so many volunteers who donate their time to develop and leads the tours.

#### **4. MARKETING AND DIGITAL MEDIA**

Peter Ignazi gave an update on marketing and digital media with highlights in the four main areas of performance metrics:

- E-news: 8,600 subscribers, grown 8% this year
- Social Media: Audiences are most engaged with Instagram with 5,500 followers, but Facebook and Twitter are also doing well. Current posts focus on award nominees and tours. Ms. Vigneswaramoorthy is developing a story on the Tamil community of Toronto for Instagram and is also working on featuring Emerging Historians.
- Website: The website is four years old which is fairly old in the digital world. It will be redone in 2023 and, while it will not be a total overhaul, it will at least fix some of the glitches that are currently happening.
- Earned media: There was great coverage for both the Underground Railroad Restaurant plaque unveiling as well as the David Bookman plaque unveiling at the Horseshoe Tavern.

Allison Bain noted the website re-development would be dependent on fundraising and releasing agency investments.

Going forward, Mr. Ignazi noted the priority of growing social media engagement and investing in cost-effective growth. Ms. Chalaidopoulos encouraged board members to engage with and follow Heritage Toronto on social media platforms.

#### **5. DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Mr. Sanderson noted that there had been two Development Committee meetings since the last Board meeting to get the Awards Sponsorship campaign moving. He explained that the development committee is confident the Awards Sponsorship goal will be reached. He thanked Mr. Ecclestone for introducing the Development Committee to possible sponsorship opportunities and reminded board members to purchase Awards tickets. Ms. Chalaidopoulos also encouraged the board to purchase their tickets.

#### **6. FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Ms. Bain reviewed the Financial Statements as of Aug 31, 2022, noting the agency is on track financially. However, this budget is dependent on revenues from the upcoming October Awards and the year-end donor campaign. As the agency is

currently sitting on a very small \$5k cushion, it is important to hit these budget targets.

Ms. Bain directed the Board to the first draft of the 2023 Budget which requires Board approval prior to being submitted to the City by Monday, September 18th. Ms. Bain reviewed a few key components of the budget. Although payroll looks high in comparison to previous years, in reality it only reflects full-time staffing restored to 2019 levels. The Equity Project revenues and expenses are substantial in 2023 reflecting three one-year Emerging Historian contracts. The agency will also be largely self-funding re-development of the website.

**HT 22-16: APPROVAL OF APPROVAL OF THE 2023 OPERATING BUDGET SUBMITTED TO THE CITY OF TORONTO. (carried)**

Moved by Lori Davison seconded by Peter Ignazi, and approved unanimously.

**8. JURIES COMMITTEE**

Christopher Castellano motioned for the board to move in camera.

**HT 22-17: MOTION FOR THE BOARD TO MOVE IN CAMERA GIVEN THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF AWARDS RECOMMENDATIONS (carried)**

Moved by Sarah Watson, seconded by Peter Ignazi and approved unanimously.

Mr. Castellano presented the recommended 2022 Heritage Toronto Awards winners for consideration by the board.

**HT 22-18: APPROVAL OF THE 2022 HERITAGE TORONTO AWARDS WINNERS (carried)**

Moved by Peter Ignazi seconded by Sandy Kedey, and approved unanimously.

**HT 22-19: MOTION FOR THE BOARD TO MOVE OUT OF CAMERA GIVEN THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF AWARDS RECOMMENDATIONS (carried)**

Moved by Sarah Watson, seconded by, John McAlister, and approved unanimously.

**D. OTHER BUSINESS**

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 7:23.

  
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Liza Chalaidopoulos, Chair