

This meeting of the Heritage Toronto Board was held on April 14, 2021 from 6-7:30pm. As per direction by the City of Toronto in accordance with Toronto Public Health guidelines, this meeting was held remotely via Zoom video call.

PRESENT:

Liza Chalaidopoulos (Chair)	Peter Berton
Lori Davison	Councillor Paula Fletcher
Juliet French	Martin Green
Peter Ignazi	Jeff Junke
Louis Kan	Sean Kheraj
Claire Nelischer	Peggy Hornell
Aaron Sanderson	Linda Strachan
Leslie Thompson	Karen Whaley
Jay Pariseau	

REGRETS:

Fallon Butler	Councillor Mike Colle
Sandy Kedey	James Lane

ALSO PRESENT: Allison Bain, Executive Director
Chris Bateman, Manager, Plaques and Public Education
Laura Carlson, Manager, Public Programs
Lucy Di Pietro, Manager, Marketing and Communications
Heather Kingdon, Operations Coordinator
Candice McCavitt, Manager, Development
Andrew Himel, Programming Committee

A. OPENING REMARKS, AGENDA, AND MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Liza Chalaidopoulos called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory

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

3. Introductions and Opening Remarks by Chair and Executive Director

Ms. Chalaidopoulos thanked staff for all of their work and congratulated the group for winning the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for the Heritage at Home series.

4. Approval of Agenda

HT 21-05: APPROVAL OF AGENDA for the April 14, 2021 Board Meeting of Heritage Toronto. **(Carried)**

Moved by Linda Strachan, seconded by Leslie Thompson, and approved unanimously.

5. Declarations of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest.

6. Approval of Minutes of Previous Board Meeting

HT 21-06: APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the meeting of the Board of Heritage Toronto held December 16th, 2020. **(Carried)**

Moved by Peter Berton, seconded by Claire Nelischer, and approved unanimously.

7. Approval of Minutes of Previous Board Meeting

HT 21-07: APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the meeting of the Board of Heritage Toronto held February 4th, 2021. **(Carried)**

Moved by Karen Whaley, seconded by Jeff Junke, and approved unanimously.

8. Approval of Minutes of Previous Board Meeting

HT 21-08: APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the meeting of the Board of Heritage Toronto held March 19th, 2021. **(Carried)**

Moved by Aaron Sanderson, seconded by Karen Whaley, and approved unanimously.

B. CONSENT AGENDA

1. HT 21-09: APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA **(Carried)**

Moved by Peter Berton, seconded by Leslie Thompson, and approved unanimously.

Allison Bain reviewed the Executive Report noting the agency continues to balance short-term and long-term goals. Although the agency continues to operate remotely with reduced staffing, it has created significant public programming thanks to a loyal donor and sponsor base. Ms. Bain thanked the City of Toronto and members of Toronto City Council for their continued support.

Ms. Bain highlighted a few points from the Executive Report:

- End of year campaign donations from 2020 will be used in 2021 for Emerging Historian contracts. Given the timing issues of these donations, these deferrals will respect the donors' intentions.

- A few years ago the HT website was revamped. This foresight allowed the agency to efficiently produce digital content in 2020/2021.
- This week, the agency received news which will directly increase its programming diversity. TD Bank has committed \$420,000 to the agency over a three year period to strengthen work telling the stories of BIPOC communities in Toronto. This is a significant investment and vote of confidence from the agency's largest sponsor.
- The feasibility of the 2021 Heritage Toronto Awards is undetermined at this point, both from safety and financial perspectives. Ms. Bain opened the floor for questions and comments on the possibility of hosting the Awards.

Martin Green asked about the deadline to make decisions about the Awards. Ms. Bain noted there were two significant questions which affect deadlines.

One, is an in-person event feasible from the perspectives of staffing resources, financial impacts and unpredictable public safety guidelines? Councillor Fletcher noted the possibility of a 4th wave of Covid-19 in July based on current modelling.

Two, if the decision is made to hold the Awards digitally, would they follow the panel discussion format from last year or re-establish the bestowing of Awards? If Awards are to be given out, the deadline is currently set for July 14th based on consultation with Ms. Karen Whaley, Chair of the Juries Committee, to ensure adequate time for Jury deliberations.

Peter Berton inquired about the timing of a Call For Nominations. Ms. Bain noted that the current plan was to send out a call for nominations in July with adjudication in August and September.

Mr. Berton suggested that, if the Awards will happen either in-person or digitally, it would make sense to launch the Call for Nominations prior to July 14th. Councillor Paula Fletcher expressed her enthusiasm for an online virtual Awards ceremony with support from various sponsors. Several Board members echoed this sentiment.

Linda Strachan expressed her support for planning for both a virtual and in-person awards event, launching nominations as early as possible and adjusting accordingly as it becomes clear which format is best for the agency.

Leslie Thompson asked if there is any rough estimate for what it would cost to host a virtual award ceremony.

Ms. Bain explained that the event would have a cost associated as it would be necessary to outsource the technological aspects. Based on the 2020 experience, it may prove difficult to secure enough sponsorship to maintain the Awards as the agency's largest fundraiser.

The decision may be taken to present the Awards at a financial loss in order to maintain public service, recognition and brand profile.

Ms. Bain thanked all Board members for their comments and questions and noted that staff would re-examine the Awards' possibilities based on their input.

C. REPORTS

1. Finance and Audit Committee

Louis Kan thanked everyone for approving the agency's 2020 Audited Financial Statements. He noted the financial statements would be posted publicly in June.

HT 21-10: APPROVAL OF THE 2021 BUDGET DATED APRIL 7, 2021 (carried)

Moved by Leslie Thompson and approved unanimously.

Mr. Kan presented the 2021 budget which has been projected to break even. He noted that there is no reason to believe the agency will not receive its full operating funding from the City. Earned revenues are still projected significantly lower than 2019 Actuals as in-person as Tours and Awards will operate, at best, with heavily reduced capacity which affects both ticket sales and donations. In terms of expenses, it will be important to re-evaluate staffing in 2021 as the agency is still holding a programming vacancy.

Mr. Berton inquired about the decrease in public revenue from 2020. Ms. Bain noted the decrease is a reflection that federal project funding, and associated expenses, have ended with the conclusion of the Sounds Like Toronto project.

Sean Kheraj asked about payroll expenses, and whether this would stay the same as 2020, to account for the staffing mix. He asked whether total expenses would cumulatively bounce back over the years. Mr. Kan stated this was correct.

Aaron Sanderson asked whether TD's new commitment had been captured in the budget for 2021. Ms. Bain responded that the revenue will not be projected until associated expenses can be projected. These expenses, and their timing, will be influenced by staffing capacity and the ability to mentor a new staff member and additional Emerging Historians.

HT 21-11: THE HERITAGE TORONTO BOARD APPROVES THE AGENCY TO ENTER INTO A DESIGNATED AGENCY FUND AGREEMENT WITH FILMMAKER MICHAEL KAINER. (Carried)

Moved by Louis Kan, seconded by Leslie Thompson and approved unanimously.

Mr. Green asked for an explanation of the proposed arrangement between the filmmaker, Michael Kainer and Heritage Toronto.

Mr. Kan explained that it is common practice for artists to work with registered charities to run their administration and enable issuing tax receipts for donations. The CRA does have strict guidelines including that the project must be within the charity's mandate and the charity must have direction over the disbursement of expenses and revenues. Over the years, Heritage Toronto has administered a small number of such agreements and the Finance Committee is confident in this agreement. A set of guidelines has been established by the Finance committee to protect Heritage Toronto's charitable status.

2. Strategic Plan

Liza Chalaidopoulos noted the Strategic Planning Task Force has been actively meeting for six months to draft purpose statements and goals. Mr. Green thanked his colleagues on the Board Task Force, added that the Task Force held a session with staff for feedback, and noted that operationalizing the Strategic Plan will be staff's responsibility.

A presentation ensued, led by Ms. Chalaidopoulos, on Heritage Toronto's 2021-2023 Strategic Plan. Ms. Chalaidopoulos asked for questions or comments and noted the presentation would be sent out with requests for feedback.

Peter Ignazi requested that there be more discussion around Goal 3: "Heritage Toronto defines and enhances its impact on Toronto." Ms. Chalaidopoulos noted this goal stemmed from the question: How do we know what our impact is meant to be? She explained, it is important to define what the goal impact is first before delving into measuring this impact.

Juliet French asked for clarification on Goal 4: "Heritage Toronto improves its position as a financially sustainable charity." She asked how detailed the priorities are and if we have cross-checked these with funders. Martin Green noted this is a high-level goal. Mr. Kheraj noted that he is not comfortable with the suggestion that Heritage Toronto reduce its reliance on public funds to operate. He explained that Heritage Toronto is an agency and it was important to stress our public service mandate and funding model.

Aaron Sanderson suggested that the goals depend on Heritage Toronto's audience. For example, younger audiences would require different priorities in terms of content and therefore in terms of funding. This may have a significant impact on the direction of the agency. The agency needs to set its direction and priorities and then reach out and find funding that aligns - sometimes this will include new organizations.

It was noted that the 2019 Cossette Report had defined audiences. Although this work may need to be revisited post pandemic, Lucy Di Pietro explained that the report did identify a key group and this can be re-sent to board members.

Sean Kheraj expressed that he appreciates being able to provide constructive feedback in written form. However, he wanted to raise the issue that the word "inclusive" was not used in the purpose statement, but "all Torontonians" was used.

D. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Kan pointed out that the Finance and Audit committee is looking for new members. His term is up in 8 months and this leaves Ms. Thompson as the only serving Board member. He encouraged Board members to reach out if interested in joining.

Mr. Sanderson asked if TD's recent funding commitment is the largest contribution in the agency's history. Ms. Bain responded in the affirmative.

HT 21-12: MEETING ADJOURNMENT

(Carried)

Moved by Peter Berton, seconded by Claire Nelischer, and approved unanimously.

The meeting was terminated at 7:14 pm.