

This meeting of the Heritage Toronto Board was held on Sept 27, 2023, from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence Hall (157 King St. East, 3rd floor, Toronto).

PRESENT:

Liza Chalaidopoulos (Chair)	Bradley Evoy
Christopher Castellano	Dilys Chan
Lori Davison	Anne Deck
David Ecclestone	Martin Green
Peter Ignazi	Jeff Junke
Sandy Kedey	Gretchen Mangahas
John McAlister	Councillor Gord Perks
Sanah Rizvi	Aaron Sanderson
Colin Smillie	Sarah Watson

REGRETS:

Anne Deck  
Councillor Paula Fletcher  
Suzanne Kavanagh  
James Lane  
Joel Peters

ALSO PRESENT:

Allison Bain, Executive Director  
Chris Bateman, Manager, Plaques  
Laura Carlson, Manager, Public Programs  
Mira Celper, Development Coordinator  
Lucy Di Pietro, Manager, Marketing and Communications  
Selma Elkhazin, Programming Coordinator  
Claire Jansen-Faught, Project Coordinator  
Heather Kingdon, Operations Coordinator  
Nadia Sule, Programming Coordinator

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

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

Liza Chalaidopoulos called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

### **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 thanked everyone for making the effort to attend in person. She thanked those who have assisted with tours and reminded those who have not fulfilled their obligations to please sign up. Ms. Chalaidopoulos also noted that a special guest was in attendance and welcomed Councillor Gord Perks to the meeting.

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

**HT 23-09: APPROVAL OF AGENDA** for the September 27, 2023 Board Meeting of Heritage Toronto. **(carried)**

Moved by Bradley Evoy, seconded by Sanah Rizvi 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 23-10: APPROVAL OF MINUTES** of the meeting of the board of Heritage Toronto held June 21, 2022. **(carried)**

Moved by Sarah Watson, seconded by Bradley Evoy, and approved unanimously.

## **B. CONSENT AGENDA**

**HT 23-11: 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 city's executive compensation review. She explained that the agency has been directed to update its policies to adhere to city guidelines by Q1 of 2024. If any paid consultancy or research is needed, the agency will have to self-fund. If any board members have experience in this area, she encouraged them to reach out. She noted that a small task force will need to be assembled to undertake this task.

Allison Bain further explained that the executive compensation update is just one example of the city bringing in policies and directives with the goal to create consistency across its agencies and corporations. The city has also appointed a new auditor that will be triple the cost of the previous auditor. These directives are a significant challenge for Heritage Toronto as, given its size, it has no staff resources or budget flexibility to perform this work.

Sanah Rizvi asked how the previous Executive Compensation Policy was produced, to which Ms. Bain and Ms. Chalaidopoulos answered that it was created before their involvement with Heritage Toronto. However, Ms. Bain posited that the city managers' office had more of an operational role in past years, and they likely were more involved in the process of establishing the agency's executive compensation policy and band ranges. Ms. Chalaidopoulos noted that the current policy is outdated.

Ms. Rizvi and Sarah Watson offered to assist with updating the policy. Councillor Gord Perks also offered to assist and noted that the city is not targeting Heritage Toronto with these changes in policy, but rather, is working on establishing clear equitable standards across all of its entities.

Ms. Bain also noted that the agency, both staff and board, no longer have a role in nominating board members. The city will be interviewing and nominating candidates independently using city staff from other divisions as the nominating committee. Peter Ignazi asked whether the board and staff can brief the selection committee, to which Ms. Bain answered that board members and staff can only suggest key competencies being sought.

Councillor Perks explained this new approach was intended to ensure that the city's boards and agencies are balanced in terms of diversity and inclusion which has long been a challenge.

Councillor Perks explained that the public appointment committee at the city will frame the posting for the board member position. Heritage Toronto will have an influence on what this posting says. The committee will also undertake targeted outreach. Once resumés are received, the City Clerk's office will review the resumés against the criteria created. They will then form a list of eligible candidates and shortlist the top candidates. This list will go to the Civic Appointments committee, which takes recommendations from the City Clerk's office. These candidates then go to city council.

Ms. Rizvi asked whether the issue is that boards are not getting enough diverse candidates or if there is not enough effort in trying to attract members of equity-deserving communities? Councillor Perks responded that it is both.

Many agencies do not undertake outreach or recruit from communities with a high proportion of equity-deserving individuals. The city is trying to make the process more objective, transparent, and accountable.

## **2. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Allison Bain invited the Equity Heritage coordinators to speak on their projects, including:

- The State of Heritage events (Marking Place, Making History, State of Heritage Panel event) – Claire Jansen-Faught
- Truth and Reconciliation – Selma Elkhazin, Nadia Sule
- Black Placemaking – Selma Elkhazin
- The Full Moon Festival – Jingshu Yao

Ms. Bain encouraged board members to attend the Full Moon Festival on October 1. She also welcomed the agency's new Development Manager, Andrea Switzer, to the team. Ms. Switzer introduced herself to the board.

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

In James Lane's absence, Ms. Bain reviewed the financial statements as of August 31, 2023.

The agency is currently operating within budget. Tour revenues are soft, but Laura Carlson is consistently booking private tours when possible, to bolster shortfalls in tour ticket revenue. It should be noted that two large projects, the website revitalization and State of Heritage, will not be completed until 2024 so targeted revenue and expense will be deferred.

Ms. Bain highlighted that a significant portion of the agency's private and earned revenue is received in the latter half of the year. Thus, it is paramount that the Awards event sells well, and the End of Year donor campaign is strong. These two factors will have an impact on the year end position.

Ms. Bain reviewed the 2024 Budget which has been submitted to the city. She invited questions from the board and explained that the city has directed the agency to make no funding requests for new initiatives as their priority is to maintain current levels of public service. A funding decision will be communicated in February/March.

Ms. Bain noted that TD Bank has received an application to extend the Heritage Equity Initiative which they initially funded 2020-2023. TD is a fantastic partner as they agreed to allow an application seeking an additional two years of funding.

A decision will be made by November and, as before, all revenue will be offset by expense.

Lori Davison asked whether the TD sponsorship is restricted. Ms. Bain noted that, although a portion of funds are restricted to the Heritage Equity Initiative in general, TD Bank gives the agency freedom to use the funds as it best sees fit.

Bradley Evoy asked whether another large funder will be sought out if TD does not renew their support. Ms. Bain noted that Ms. Switzer will be prioritising government and foundation grants in the coming months, which is an area that the agency has not focused on in the past. There is also room in the budget to direct Emerging Historian funds to Equity Heritage Initiative projects. Ms. Bain added that while the ask from TD was two more years of funding, the agency's main contacts have moved on to different roles, so there are fewer familiar faces at TD.

John McAlister commented that there are some great opportunities to define why Heritage Toronto matters to the city and there is encouraging work still to come.

Aaron Sanderson asked how many tickets to the Awards have been sold to which Ms. Bain replied that about 200 have been sold including sponsors. She added that the Awards are almost one month away so there is still much time to sell. Ms. Chalaidopoulos encouraged the board to purchase their tickets to the Awards.

**HT 23-12: APPROVAL OF APPROVAL OF THE 2024 OPERATING BUDGET DATED AUGUST 31, 2023 AND SUBMITTED TO THE CITY OF TORONTO.**

**(carried)**

Moved by Martin Green, seconded by Sanah Rizvi and approved unanimously.

Martin Green explained that the Finance and Audit committee has been working on establishing a draft Investment Policy. He noted that the goal is to invest a portion of funds, keep some in reserve, and safeguard funds that have been designated. The Finance and Audit Committee has consulted with TD on creating this policy.

Ms. Rizvi asked if the committee could go through some of the options that were suggested. Mr. Green explained that, once the policy has been approved, the committee would then review the options, make investments, and report back to the board on a regular basis.

**HT 23-13: APPROVAL OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAVING THE AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE INVESTMENT OF FUNDS NOT BEING HELD IN TRUST, AND NOT REQUIRED FOR AN OPERATING RESERVE FUND, IN A PORTFOLIO OF INVESTMENTS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE A LOW OR MODERATELY LOW RISK OF LOSS OF CAPITAL OVER THE MEDIUM TO LONGER TERM, SUBJECT TO REPORTING TO THE BOARD ON THE STATUS OF THE INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO AT LEAST ANNUALLY. (carried)**

Moved by Aaron Sanderson, seconded by Colin Smillie, and approved unanimously.

#### **4. PROGRAMS COMMITTEE**

Sarah Watson gave an update on programming, noting some of the successes and challenges thus far. Successes include positive feedback on the use of headsets on tours, attracting a more diverse and younger audience, and a high-level of participation at events that include more than one kind of programming (e.g., a plaque unveiling followed by a walking tour). Challenges include low donation levels at community events, lower tour donations due perhaps to the \$8 ticket fee, and the administrative workload produced by many onsite ticket purchases.

Ms. Watson highlighted the June 23 Jackie Shane plaque-unveiling event, noting that it had 80 attendees with strong representation from the LGBTQ2S+ community, as well as all three levels of government.

On July 1, the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Heritage Toronto held a joint plaque unveiling and walking-tour event which had a great turnout of 100 people and welcoming remarks from the Mayor.

Ms. Watson mentioned that, to date, 18 plaques have been produced and there are more in progress. She explained that many plaque installations have been delayed due to issues with the Right-of-Way Permit Office in the Transportation Services division at the City of Toronto. They are no longer issuing installation permits. The agency is now planning to install 30 plaques this year compared to the original goal of 50.

Mr. Sanderson asked if there were any updates on resolving this issue, to which Mr. Bateman replied that there were no updates at the moment. Alternate locations for certain plaques are being considered.

#### **5. MARKETING AND DIGITAL MEDIA**

Peter Ignazi gave an update on marketing and digital media, noting that the focus on the committee was audience development. He referred to the Cossette Report which recommended the agency build its audience by assessing the current

programming audience. It is important to pinpoint who is engaging with the agency's content, both online and in person. This data, he explained, can then be used to find areas of improvement and to inform programming going forward. The first step is to create a template detailing which analytics to use. He asked the board to let him know if anyone has expertise in this area.

Mr. McAlister asked how the donor experience is being considered in the website redevelopment process, to which Colin Smillie answered that the team can update certain elements that serve donors, but details around this have yet to be discussed. Mr. McAlister explained that there is room for improvement in how donors experience the website. He noted that currently, the checkout process presents as very commercial and there is room to change this into a more impactful and meaningful experience regarding how donations support the charity.

Ms. Rizvi asked if the committee could tell how many emails reach people's inboxes. She added that her emails from Heritage Toronto often go straight to the junk folder. Mr. Smillie responded that these stats are available.

Lucy Di Pietro added that the agency uses Constant Contact to do outreach and digital campaigns. The agency consistently has good click rates and emails are reaching people.

Mr. Evoy asked if AODA compliance has been considered in the website redevelopment, to which Mr. Smillie responded yes, this is currently being worked on.

Gretchen Mangahas suggested that the agency should consider partnering with universities and colleges to offer contract work assisting with the website updates. Mr. Ignazi and Mr. Evoy expressed support for this idea.

## **6. DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Mr. McAlister gave an update on development noting that the committee is always working towards making Heritage Toronto a financially sustainable organization. As Awards Sponsorship is at 80% of budget and there are many tickets still available, he requested board support to identify additional sponsors and ticket buyers. The Development Committee continues to seek new members and he encouraged board members to reach out if they, or people they know, would be interested in joining the committee.

## **7. JURIES COMMITTEE**

Christopher Castellano thanked Board members Anne Deck and David Ecclestone, and former Board Chair Kate Marshall for their hard work in adjudicating the

Awards nominees. He also thanked Laura Carlson for all her hard work on the Awards. There were 17 jury members this year, all of whom dedicated ample time and effort to the Awards. Regarding the process overall, he explained that the quality and quantity of submissions was fantastic. There were 51 submissions resulting in 47 nominees.

One issue that the Juries Committee will be reviewing is how to tackle the large number of book submissions that is received each year. While the submissions are good, it is difficult for jury members to read the significant number of books required in such a short timespan. Mr. Castellano also noted that the Public History category will be reconsidered as it has become a catch-all category for many different projects. How to better define this category's criteria will be assessed. The Built Heritage submissions tend to all come in at the last minute. This is something, Mr. Castellano added, that the jury also wants to discuss, as well as how to make the submission process for this category easier.

Christopher Castellano motioned for the board to move in camera.

**HT 23-14: MOTION FOR THE BOARD TO MOVE IN CAMERA GIVEN THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF AWARDS RECOMMENDATIONS (carried)**

Moved by Colin Smillie, seconded by Brad Evoy and approved unanimously.

Mr. Castellano presented the recommended 2023 Heritage Toronto Awards winners for consideration by the board.

**HT 23-15: APPROVAL OF THE 2023 BOOK AWARD WINNER (carried)**

Moved by Colin Smillie, seconded by Brad Evoy and approved unanimously.

**HT 23-16: APPROVAL OF THE 2023 BUILT HERITAGE AWARD WINNER (carried)**

Declaring Conflict of Interest, David Ecclestone abstained from voting for the Built Heritage category.

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

**HT 23-17: APPROVAL OF THE 2023 PUBLIC HISTORY AWARD WINNER (carried)**

Moved by Gretchen Mangahas, seconded by Dilys Chan and approved unanimously.



**HT 23-18: MOTION FOR THE BOARD TO MOVE OUT OF CAMERA**

**(carried)**

Moved by Brad Evoy, seconded by Colin Smillie, and approved unanimously.

Mr. Ignazi asked if there is a fee associated with Awards submissions, to which Mr. Castellano responded that there is not. One of the reasons the agency receives so many book submissions is because self-published books and many smaller publications can nominate their own work. The no-fee model makes submissions accessible and if a fee was required, the agency could miss out on important work. There does need to be discussion around how to simplify the submission process for certain categories, but there still needs to be enough material submitted for the judges to properly adjudicate.

Ms. Mangahas applauded the Juries Committee for considering those who may have a difficult time paying a submission fee.

**HT 23-19: APPROVAL OF THE 2023 VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD WINNER**

**(carried)**

Moved by Christopher Castellano, seconded by Aaron Sanderson, and approved unanimously.

**D. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. McAlister commented that he would like to discuss at a later date the best method for where, when, and how to make a pitch for donations at the end of tours.

A discussion ensued around keeping staff and volunteers safe on tours. Ms. Bain noted that tour staff have recently taken de-escalation training and noted the importance of other staff and board members supporting them at events. Mr. Evoy drew the board's attention to the City of Toronto's pilot program for mental health support services. He noted that this might be useful for staff and volunteers to be aware of while out on tours.

**HT 23-20: MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING**

**(carried)**

Moved by Liza Chalaidopoulos, seconded by John McAlister, and approved unanimously.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.