

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Planning and Operations Committee
FROM: Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee
DATE: May 4, 2011
SUBJECT: 2010 Annual Report – Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee
FILE NO.: CK. 430-27

RECOMMENDATION: that this report be submitted to City Council as information.

BACKGROUND:

The 2010 membership of the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee was as follows:

Mr. James Winkel, Chair, public appointment
Mr. Joseph-Michel Fortier, Vice-Chair, public appointment
Ms. Mary Tastad, public appointment
Mr. Dave Denny, public appointment
Ms. Barbara Anderson, Saskatoon Regional Association of Realtors
Ms. Lenore Swystun, Saskatoon Heritage Society
Ms. Cecilia Elizabeth, Riversdale Business Improvement District
Ms. Gale Hagblom (January, 2010), Ms. Tammy Thompson (November, 2010),
Broadway Business Improvement District
Mr. Terry Scaddan, Downtown Business Improvement District
Ms. Brenda Wallace, (January-September, 2010) Meewasin Valley Authority
Ms. Dorothea Funk, Local History Room, Saskatoon Public Library
Mr. Allan Duddridge, Saskatoon Association of Architects
Mr. Michael Williams, Saskatoon Archaeological Society
Mr. Sheldon Wasylenko, Sutherland Business Improvement District
Mr. Peter Kingsmill, Tourism Saskatoon
Councillor C. Clark

REPORT:

In 2010 the activities of the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC) included the following among other duties:

- managing a booth at the Heritage Festival,
- continued involvement in Doors Open Program
- establishing preliminary organizational procedures for the 2012 Heritage Awards Program; and
- overseeing regular submission of articles for the *Sunday Sun*.

The Committee heard presentations in 2010 on many heritage-related subjects, including the Traffic Bridge, Factoria, The Moose Jaw Trail, and re-use of the Mendel Art Gallery. The Committee was quite active in supporting Stantec and Administration for wording on public panel boards used for the Traffic Bridge public forum, and continues to monitor progress on possible improvements to the Heritage Policy.

Committee members did a great deal of work during the year, often breaking into task groups which required quite a commitment of personal volunteer time.

The Committee raised a concern about being underutilized, and believes there is potential for MHAC to be much more useful to City Council. Members represent the four business improvement districts, businesses, tourism, Meewasin Valley Authority, real estate, Saskatoon Heritage Society, architecture, archaeology, the University, the Public Library, a Council representative and representatives of the general public. As a result, the Committee has deep connections in the community, and vast experience related to heritage. It is the Committee's belief that this experience, combined with community connections, which could be a much greater asset to City Council, and to the Heritage Coordinator.

The Committee acknowledges that its mandate is primarily limited to advising City Council. It is not in the mandate to be activists for heritage, nor to direct the activities of Administration. However, within that limited role, MHAC believes that there is much more that it could do. There are many heritage protection activities that are less severe than recommending demolition/stop-orders. For example tools at the Committee's disposal might be to recommend removing artifacts before demolition or renovation, suggesting specific renovation modification which might be more consistent with preserving heritage aspects, encouraging building owners to pursue heritage funding, photo-documenting the site before demolition, or searching for building re-use options in the business community. Again, as advisors, the Committee has broad expertise and business connections within the community which could be a great asset to City Council and to the Heritage Coordinator as they pursue these options. Unfortunately, if MHAC is left out of the loop, the Committee cannot provide timely advice.

MHAC has identified three possible reasons why the Committee may sometimes receive late notification:

1. Neither MHAC nor the Heritage Coordinator are automatically notified when possible heritage issues arise. If this were done in a systematic manner, there could be time for effective advice and action.
2. The Heritage Coordinator position has been inconsistent in recent years (notwithstanding that the situation related to health concerns).
3. It may sometimes be perceived by City Council and by Administration that the Committee is biased in favour of outcomes that incorporate a physical and cultural heritage.

Furthermore, while open houses and public forums are a great method of developing community support for a project, and for getting public feedback, the Committee believes that committees like MHAC can also serve a similar purpose. Members represent a broad spectrum within the community and can tap into their respective constituencies to provide City Council with organized feedback from a broad-based perspective.

Another issue that the Committee faces is the constant need to break into task groups to get tasks completed in that this is too time consuming or complex to be handled during MHAC meetings. The Committee has several task groups to oversee policy issues, related to specific projects. MHAC believes that these task groups fulfill a vital role, however they require a great deal of volunteer time which is probably unsustainable over the long term.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS:

MHAC hopes to initiate a dialogue with City Council and/or Administration in the months ahead to explore these issues and pursue possible solutions.

Written by: **Dave Denny, Chair**

Approved by: _____
Dave Denny, Chair
Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee
Dated: May 4, 2011