

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

DATE: 2016 January 25

FROM: CITY ARCHIVIST

FILE: 2410-20
*Reference: Community Heritage
Commission*

SUBJECT: CITY OF BURNABY ARCHIVES ANNUAL REPORT 2015

PURPOSE: To present the 2015 Annual Report of the City of Burnaby Archives

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The City of Burnaby Archives had a robust and engaging year in 2015 due in large part to our participation in Burnaby Community Heritage Commission initiated Capital Projects: the 'Heritage Burnaby Website Upgrades & Book Scanning Project', the 'Archives Film Digitization Project' and the 'Burnaby Mountain Oral History Project.' We were also participants in the Information Technology Department's 'File Pro Migration Project.'

Records broken this year include committing 40% of staff time to concurrent Capital Projects and a new record of 92 research requests received and fulfilled in one month.

The following report provides a summary of our operations throughout 2015.

HISTORY OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS PROGRAM [OVERVIEW]

The City of Burnaby Archives opened in the new McGill Library in 2001 and functions as a division of the Office of the City Clerk. The Archives is the official repository for all inactive civic records of permanent administrative, legal, fiscal, historical, evidential and/or informational value to the City of Burnaby. Archival material is preserved as evidence of the functions, legal rights, obligations, policies, decisions, procedures, accountabilities, and operations of the City. It is the responsibility of the City Archives to ensure the preservation and accessibility of these vital records by providing proper facilities, environmental controls and professional management resources to maintain the archival material in perpetuity.

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Our City record description and digitization program has produced a current index of all Council minutes and reports dating back to 1934 and can be searched online with full-text versions of the documents, available from 1977 to the present. All City Bylaws, dating back to 1892, are also available as full-text pdf documents online as are descriptions and finding aids for all files and records in our holdings.

In addition, the Archives has supported the protection and preservation of the City's documentary heritage by way of its expanded collections mandate and the incorporation of the Burnaby Historical Society Community Archives collections into the City's holdings. This transfer saw over 100 meters of textual records and over 10,000 photographs moved to the Archives facility in 2007.

CURRENT ARCHIVAL RECORDS PROGRAM

January 2015 saw the description of community records brought in by the SFU / Burnaby Centennial Committee as well as updates to community record descriptions already in our holdings, including the Image Bank Collection and records belonging to Mary Forsyth.

By February an issue had arose –the first estimate for City file transfers that Archives received for 2015 would fill least 135 bankers boxes (more than double the total amount for all of 2014 at 68 boxes). This realization put a fine point on our physical space issue as the 135 boxes would take up what is left on our shelves; and our current staffing levels could not handle the work of describing this many records at once. The good piece of news was that the transfers would be staggered; with 15 boxes imminent from Planning, 40 boxes from Engineering to be received in deliveries of 10 boxes at a time over the next few weeks, and a further 80 boxes from Planning coming sometime mid-year.

The Planning and Building Department transferred 8 boxes of records of enduring value to the Archives in March. Engineering transferred 40 boxes of records but then learnt that these records should not have come to the Archives and were sent back. All other City transfers were temporarily put on hold.

March also included the breaking of our previously held monthly record of 77 research requests (May 2012) with 92 research requests received and fulfilled in one month.

The report 'Business Case for the Expansion of the Archives' was brought forward to the Community Heritage Commission (CHC) at their regular meeting 02 April, and forwarded on to Council, which resulted in the suggestion of a Council workshop.

The CHC were presented with a workshop at their regular meeting 04 June and the City Clerk and Archives staff were fortunate to meet with Mayor Corrigan and Councillor Jordan in July to talk about the Archives where a number of suggestions were made as to what could possibly be done to extend the life of the current archives short of a new or expanded facility.

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In November, the City Clerk met with His Worship Mayor Corrigan with a response in which he described that there are ways and means of delaying or putting off an expansion of the Archives, but if we are to continue to meet our legal and organizational responsibilities in terms of preserving permanent City records, and in addition continue to accept community records which currently make up 9% of our holdings, we do need to continue to plan for a larger space in the foreseeable future.

The increasing move to digital records will not be the answer to our problem. And in fact the absence of an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) further detracts from our ability to reduce our reliance on original paper copies.

The various options and alternatives that have been considered will not in themselves preclude the need for more archival storage space as a means of preserving the City and community permanent records and history.

Also in the fall, the Archives participated in BC Audio Visual Inventory Initiative (AVII), a province-wide survey to facilitate the creation of a comprehensive inventory of audiovisual holdings in British Columbia, by providing a detailed survey of City of Burnaby Archives A/V records.

Description of community records continued with Krewenchuk family and McQueen family records from this year, School District 41 records, Standen family and Massey family records from 2014, along with Myers family, Peter family, and Stiglish family records from 2013, as well as Planning and Building Department records transferred this year and backlogged records originally transferred from the Mayor's office. These records have now been catalogued and indexed according to the highest level of archival practices and standards, thus allowing the public and City Officials quick, efficient and direct access to information stored within them.

HERITAGE BURNABY & PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

2015 began with the continuation of the Burnaby Community Heritage Commission 'Heritage Burnaby Website Upgrades & Book Scanning Project' and the 'Archives Moving Images Project.' Once the sub-committee met in January of 2015 and set Burnaby Mountain as the project's theme for the renewed 'Oral History Project,' a full 40% of Archives' staff time became committed to Capital projects.

Testing on the Website Upgrades (and Help documentation to be created by the IT team) began in the spring and the website officially launched 08 September 2015. At the recommendation of the CHC, the updated website was demonstrated to Council and citizens at the regular Council meeting 26 October 2015. A demonstration of Heritage Burnaby was also part of the Archives, Libraries and Museums Conference in Nova Scotia 17 September and the British Columbia Association of Heritage Professionals meeting 27 November.

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The renewed Oral History project included the digitization and description of SFU / Burnaby Centennial donation from 2014 of Oral History tapes in April but the bulk of the budget would be focused on the many uses that take place and are accommodated within the boundaries of Burnaby Mountain. These uses range from hiking, biking and conservation area to post-secondary education facilities and industry uses. 2015 was also a very significant year for Simon Fraser University as it celebrated its 50th anniversary. The Burnaby Mountain Oral History Project is well underway and on schedule. The target is to obtain twenty-four interviews with the completion date set for March of 2016.

The Burnaby Art Gallery Offsite Exhibition 'People with Cameras' at Bob Prittie Library Branch was created in collaboration with the City of Burnaby Archives. The exhibition featured photographs from the Archives holdings and the Offsite Exhibition talk was presented by Archives and gallery staff on the afternoon of May 24.

Archives staff were also participants in the Information Technology Department's 'File Pro Migration Project.' In March an auxiliary was engaged to do the work of migrating Council records – this work was completed in September and the auxiliary responsible has since assumed the job roles and duties of clerical staff at the Archives.

CONCLUSION

Our 2016 work schedule includes the completion of the Oral History Project as well as the continued pursuit of a solution to Archives space shortage. We will continue to tackle our 10 years' worth of backlogged [existing] holdings through accessioning, arranging and describing of records, in order to provide record access and research assistance to both City staff and the public.

The resources that have been provided to allow a regular full-time archival assistant position and an increase in hours for the part-time auxiliary clerk have been integral to the success of our archival records program and our ability to service vital capital projects throughout this year. Under the continued guidance and support of the Community Heritage Commission and Burnaby City Council, we look forward to building on these successes as we move into 2016.

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Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca Pasch
CITY ARCHIVIST

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cc: City Manager
Deputy City Manager (C. Turpin)
City Clerk
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Chief Librarian
Director of Planning and Building
Chief Information Officer