



Legislation Text

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TAMRMS#: B09

Poet Laureate Policy

Presented by: Catriona Gunn-Graham, Senior Manager Community and Cultural Planning and Development.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Community Living Standing Committee recommend to Council that the St. Albert Poet Laureate Policy be adopted as presented.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report brings forward a Policy (Attachment 1 - Poet Laureate Policy) which formalizes the creation and role of the City in designating a Poet Laureate, in order to better facilitate the development of a robust cultural and literary community.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Arts and Cultural Programming

Service Name: Programming

Service Definition: Delivery of arts programming to the community.

Service Component: Community Professional Series

Current Service Level: Large-scale and impactful professional programming is provided to the community as opportunities arise.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL (OR COMMITTEE) DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

N/A

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

In 2016, resident and poet Aimee Rheame approached both the City of St. Albert's then Cultural Services Department and the St. Albert Public Library with the suggestion to establish a St. Albert Poet Laureate program in order to build and better promote St. Albert's burgeoning literary community.

Determining that such a program was in alignment with the Cultural Master Plan, the City partnered with the St. Albert Public Library, and a program was developed in 2017 with the first Poet Laureate announced in April of 2018.

Cultural Master Plan alignment includes:

Priority - Celebrate Cultural Assets:

“Increase awareness of the city’s abundant cultural resources.” Recognizing those who have demonstrated superior artistic merit in the literary arts is an excellent way of celebrating our cultural assets.

Priority - Increase & Deepen Cultural Participation:

“Nurture community members in community and professional cultural pursuits; educate and inspire the next generation of cultural participants; and retain emerging artists within the City of St. Albert.” Supporting the creation of new works and having the Poet Laureate function as a cultural ambassador, speaking at public events and presenting workshops, is a high-profile way to increase and deepen cultural participation.

In order to encourage and support a diversity of voices, preference will be given to new applicants during the selection process. However, in the event that a suitable candidate cannot be found, the incumbent Laureate may be reappointed for a second term.

In the first two years of having the Poet Laureate program our first Poet Laureate, Zach Polis, has been interviewed on CBC Radio Active and CHED AM, attended the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity’s spoken word residency, recited poetry in honour of poetry month at City Council, performed at former Premier Rachel Notley’s 11th annual *Art from the Unknown*, was the host for the discussion with author Patrick deWitt at STARFest, was published in Vogue Italia “Best of” feature, hosted the St. Albert Mayor’s Celebration of the Arts Awards, was shortlisted for Alberta Artist in Residence and so much more.

Given the success of the program to date, it is recommended that the Poet Laureate be formalized and that their role as a cultural spokesperson and literary ambassador be recognized as an important contributor to St. Albert’s cultural community.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

The impetus for the Poet Laureate program came from community feedback. The program itself was developed by the Public Library in consultation and partnership with the Cultural Services Department, now Community Services.

In promoting the program to the community, the following avenues were used:

- City Lights
- St. Albert Public Library website
- Social media platforms

- Direct communication with arts and writing organizations

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

The Poet Laureate will receive an honorarium in April of each year of their term (\$1000 has been allocated for 2020). These funds will come from existing Community Services budget. No additional funds are needed.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time

Program or Service:

This is a program that celebrates the City through literary arts; and supports the development of a robust cultural and literary community in St. Albert.

Organizational:

Because the Poet Laureate process was originally created as an ad hoc program, an official process and policy is needed to formalize the Poet Laureate position.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1. The Policy be referred back to Administration for further revisions.

Alternative 2. The Policy not be approved, and the Poet Laureate continues to operate as a program.

Report Date: February 10, 2020

Author: Paul Pearson

Committee/Department: Community Services Department

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble