

Minutes

Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network
Annual General Meeting
June 3, 2006

Stewart Museum at the Old Fort
St. Helen's Island
Montreal

Call to Order

Rod MacLeod, president of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN), called the annual general meeting of the to order at approximately 10 a.m. in the Théâtre de la Poudrière outbuilding on the grounds of the historic military fort complex. By way of introductions, all members gathered for the assembly identified themselves and the various heritage organizations they represented.

Approval of the Agenda

Dick Evans of Heritage Huntingville requested that the subject of MacDonald College's upcoming centennial celebrations be added to the meeting's agenda, under New Business.

MOTION

Heather Darch of the Missisquoi Historical and Museum Society then moved to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Michael Cooper of the Gatineau Valley Historical Society. All voted in favour.

MOTION PASSED

Acceptance of the minutes

A brief review of the minutes from QAHN's 2005 annual general meeting, held at the Canadian Railway Musuem in St-Constant, ensued, with Rod drawing particular attention to a discussion regarding QAHN's policy towards heritage-at-risk, which has since formed the basis of QAHN's heritage awareness and stewardship training intitiative, also known as HASTI.

MOTION

Dick Evans moved that QAHN members accept the minutes from the 2005 annual general meeting as presented. This motion was seconded by Sandra Stock of the Morin Heights Historical Association. Members approved the motion unanimously.

MOTION PASSED

Financial Report

Rod MacLeod advised members that, because of time delays in receiving anticipated public funding for the HASTI project that QAHN undertook in in the winter of 2006, a complete audited financial report of QAHN's operations in 2005-2006 was still pending as of June 3, 2006.

Referring members to the unaudited financial statements contained in their copies of the annual report, Dick Evans, QAHN's treasurer, prefaced his remarks on the organization's financial status by cautioning that, although significant figures for revenues and expenses as presented to the membership are complete and accurate, it was possible that upon review, the auditor might move certain amounts into different categories of expenditure and expenses.

Overall, Dick reported that instead of experiencing financial shortfall at the end of the 2005-2006 fiscal year (March 31), as has often occurred in the past, QAHN's cash position in fact appeared to show a small surplus. This, said Dick, was because overall expenses amounted to slightly less than overall revenues in 2005-2006.

On the subject of revenues, Dick noted that in 2005 QAHN benefited for the first time since its inception from an important financial contribution from the provincial Ministry of Culture and Communications. He suggested that this \$15,000, coupled with a \$15,000 increase in the amount of Core operations funding QAHN received from the Department of Canadian Heritage in 2005-06, in large part explained the healthier cash position as of March 31, 2006.

Dick pointed out that the biggest single expense for QAHN in 2005-06 was for salaries, that the most significant liability was in the form of accounts payable and that the largest current asset is in the form of cash in the bank.

MOTION

Dick Evans moved that QAHN members accept the unaudited 2005-06 financial statements, provisionally, and that arrangements be subsequently be made to vote on acceptance of the audited statements when they become available. This motion was seconded by Kevin O'Donnell of the Hudson Historical Society. All voted in favour.

MOTION PASSED

MOTION

Dick Evans moved to appoint Sylvain Bouchard as QAHN's auditor once again for the upcoming fiscal year, 2006-2007. Michael Cooper seconded the motion. All voted in favour.

MOTION PASSED

Project Reports

Outaouais Heritage WebMagazine

Michael Cooper presented highlights from his report on the Outaouais Heritage Webmagazine project, developed and implemented by QAHN as part of ongoing efforts to expand its Quebec HeritageWeb program across the province. Michael described as enthusiastic and helpful the response given to QAHN throughout the six-month long development phase by local community groups and he commended Matthew Farfan, the project's coordinator and HeritageWeb editor, for a job well done bringing the history and heritage of West Quebec to the world-wide web.

"Now I encourage you all to come and visit the Outaouais region in person," he quipped, "and be sure send your friends."

Prospecting for Heritage

Dwane Wilkin, executive director of QAHN, presented a brief overview of the Prospecting for Heritage research project, which resulted in the completion of a formal report on anglophone heritage resources in four Quebec regions: Gaspé, North Shore, Lower St. Lawrence and Mauricie. This project was made possible by a contribution from the Museums Assistance Program (MAP) of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Dwane reported that Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell was hired to design and implement the study in collaboration with four research associates. It was noted that one of the main organizational objectives of this project was to identify contacts, heritage sites, artifacts, archival collections and other heritage resources with a view to stimulating development of the heritage network in these regions. Dwane reported that Dr. O'Donnell's final report was being prepared for publication, and that these findings would be posted on the main QAHN website at www.qahn.org.

Heritage and Stewardship Training Initiative

Josianne Caillet, who was hired by QAHN to oversee development and implementation of the Heritage Awareness and Stewardship Training Initiative (HASTI) briefly outlined her report on this innovative bilingual workshop series, which was conceived as a means of promoting interest and developing expertise in heritage conservation among smaller, rural municipalities. She noted that the workshops were a great success, attracting more than 250 people in 13 municipalities over a six-week period, from late March to early May, 2006.

Kevin O'Donnell, who helped to organize the HASTI workshop held in Hudson, described the meeting as very informative, and mentioned that a number of municipal councillors who attended the workshop have since expressed interest in taking steps to save a local heritage property, namely the historic MacAulay Farm barn where much of the breeding stock for Canada's dairy industry originated. The workshop, said Kevin, "was very significant in bringing a change of mindset to the town of Hudson."

Randi Olsen, a new QAHN member representing the Viking Ski Club in the Laurentians and a resident of Hudson who attended the workshop, commented, "I'm very impressed with what you're doing as a group."

Sandra Stock reported that the HASTI workshops held in the Laurentians appear to have contributed to community activism in her region, as well. She attributed strong community support for a proposal to protect a natural area near Shawbridge (Prevost Municipality) to attendance at the first HASTI meeting in the Laurentians. Three weeks following the workshop, a demonstration took place in support of a creating a new designated protected area. The land in question contains the earliest ski trails cut by Quebec ski pioneer Jackrabbit Johansen.

Another HASTI workshop seems to have encouraged the St. Sauveur Historical Society to consider taking measures to protect a rare and unusual local church hall building designed by the famous Quebec builder Victor Nymark. "I really feel that we were able to have an impact," Sandra said.

Charles Bury, a workshop presenter who organized three meetings in the Eastern Townships, perceived that for many people who took part, participation in the HASTI workshops constituted their first real bilingual experience. "I got a very positive response from the francophone community," he said.

Eunice de Gruchy, an associate member of QAHN who represents the Quebec Association for Adult Learning (QAAL) commented that the HASTI project is "a wonderful example of informal learning" and expressed interest in publishing Josiane's full report.

President's Report

Rod MacLeod introduced his remarks by reminiscing that, for many years, the Poudrière building on St. Helen's Island served as backdrop for numerous English-language theatre productions, including an Alan Ackburn production presented "30 years ago almost to the day," according to Rod, who added, "that was the last time I was in this room."

Rather than repeating all of the points found in his official written report to members, contained in QAHN's 2006 Annual Report document, Rod called particular attention to his continuing apprehension about finding a volunteer to replace him when he eventually resigns as president, and he assured members that his search for a suitable candidate will be "on my agenda" in the year ahead.

In terms of strategic development, Rod reported that QAHN's main goal in the coming months will be to make inroads into Montreal, whereupon he briefly described a proposal currently before the Department of Canadian Heritage to help QAHN sponsor a major event in the city, possibly in the spring of 2006-2007.

Rod concluded by thanking the many individuals who contributed to QAHN's successes in 2005-2006, including his fellow volunteer directors, paid staff and professional consultants who, over the course of the year, helped the Network further its goal of promoting and protecting the heritage of English-speaking Quebecers.

Resolutions

Rod introduced a written motion to change QAHN's bylaws to create a new, separate seat on the board of directors for a representative from the Laurentians region.

He explained that the Laurentians area hasn't seemed to have a clear place on the QAHN board, noting that this observation is also contained in QAHN's 2004 Needs Assessment Survey.

Rod read the motion as drafted, after which Michael Cooper commented that he was "totally in favour" of smaller constituencies for board members.

MOTION

Beverly Prud'homme moved to adopt the resolution modifying QAHN's bylaws to create a separate seat on the board of directors for the Laurentians region. The motion was seconded by Michael Cooper. All voted in favour.

MOTION PASSED

2006 Operations Review

Dwane Wilkin briefly explained the rationale for conducting a formal assessment of QAHN's progress so far in meeting the goals contained in the organization's 2004-2009 Strategic Plan, and read aloud the eight recommendations contained in the 2006 Operations Review. It will be recalled that these recommendations are based on the findings of a formal review conducted by a committee of four QAHN board members in the winter of 2006.

MOTION

Sandra Stock moved to accept the 2006 Operations Review and its recommendations. This motion was seconded by Sharon Moore-Laberee. All voted in favour.

MOTION PASSED

Other Business

Macdonald College Centennial

Dick Evans informed members that McDonald College in St. Anne-de-Bellevue is preparing to mark the 100th anniversary of its teaching program in 2007. In light of the fact that many QAHN members are former teachers who received training at Macdonald College, Dick said he hopes that QAHN will consider holding its 2007 annual general meeting at the college. Dick suggested that QAHN members could use the occasion of the anniversary to promote the AGM as a reunion of sorts for other college alumni.

Quebec City's 400th anniversary

Rod agreed that QAHN should be planning ahead, and added that the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's settlement at Quebec City the following year strongly recommends that city as the location for QAHN's 2008 annual general meeting.

Election of QAHN's board of directors

Rod MacLeod explained the process for nominating directors to serve on QAHN's board and the preference for having regional members nominate candidates in advance. Michael Cooper accepted to act as this year's elections officer.

Michael recalled his decision to step down this year as the representative for the West Quebec constituency, half-way through his two-year term, and proceeded to announce the nomination of Kevin O'Donnell as his replacement.

Michael then introduced the full slate of nominees for seats on the QAHN board of directors and asked for a motion to accept them.

MOTION

Ruth Evans of the Lennoxville and Ascot Historical and Museum Society moved to accept the nominees as presented by Michael. Beverly Prud'homme seconded the motion. All voted in favour.

MOTION PASSED

Dick Evans, treasurer, took a few moments to underline the positive developments that QAHN and Quebec's heritage community have witnessed this past year, as well as the remaining challenges. First, he reported on the presentation on religious heritage in Quebec that QAHN gave before the National Assembly's Culture Committee last February, recalling that the committee at times supported and at times were harshly challenging of the various interveners.

"One thing that's obvious," Dick reported, "is that they don't want to create the impression that just because you have a church, it has to be saved." In his estimation, the churches that are most at risk in Quebec today are the large cathedrals whose restorations are costly and therefore prohibitive for government-funded agencies such as the Fondation du patrimoine religieux. "What I can see," Dick added, "is that they're interested in preserving little churches, if there's support locally."

Dick also talked positively about his experience meeting with the Montreal Gazette's editorial board last February.

At this point, Randi Olsen asked whether QAHN has considered developing a plan to prioritize heritage-at-risk projects, based on some inventory with established criteria.

"If you go through the exercise of establishing criteria it would help build credibility," Randi said.

Louise Hall of the United Empire Loyalists Sir John Johnson Branch urged QAHN members to send birthday wishes to Marion Phelps, who continues to be an active and contributing member the Brome-Missisquoi Historical and Museum Society.

Helen Meredith, who is QAHN's advisor with the Department of Canadian Heritage, noted that Concordia University is now offering a course of studies in Public History, and suggested that this might represent an opportunity for QAHN to develop a relationship with the university.

Meeting adjourned

Rod MacLeod adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:15 p.m.