

**COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: CITY OF BURNABY ARCHIVES ANNUAL REPORT 2012**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT this report be received for information.

**REPORT**

The Community Heritage Commission, at its meeting held on 2013 March 07, received and adopted the attached 2012 Annual Report of the City of Burnaby Archives, noting many programs, projects and events, i.e. a second phase of the Oral History Project, the HistoryPin partnership with Google Maps, and 'History in the Heights' presentations.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Jordan  
Chair

Councillor N. Volkow  
Vice Chair

Councillor R. Chang  
Member

Copied to:	City Manager Deputy City Manager (C. Turpin) Director Parks, Recr. & Cult. Services Director Planning & Building Chief Librarian Chief Information Officer Acting City Clerk
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

**DATE:** 2013 January 03

**FROM:** CITY ARCHIVIST

**FILE:** 2410-20  
*Reference:* CHC

**SUBJECT:** CITY OF BURNABY ARCHIVES ANNUAL REPORT 2012

**PURPOSE:** To present the 2012 Annual Report of the City of Burnaby Archives

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

**REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

On September 22, 2012, Burnaby marked its 120<sup>th</sup> birthday. Throughout the month of September, celebrations were held across the city to commemorate this milestone and reflect on the community's collective history. Incorporating a heritage theme, the annual Dedication of Paving Stones Ceremony at Citizens Plaza kicked off the birthday events on September 15<sup>th</sup> with displays of historic photographs, costumed and period entertainment and the unveiling of the Citizens' Plaza Commemorative Wall. These festivities were highlights in what has proven to be another ambitious and award-winning year for the City of Burnaby Archives.

The following report provides a brief summary of archives operations and programs throughout 2012.

**ARCHIVAL RECORDS PROGRAM**

The City of Burnaby Archives opened in the new McGill Library in 2001. 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 activities, legal rights, obligations, policies, decisions, procedures, accountabilities, and operations of the City. The City Archives fulfils its corporate function by safeguarding and providing access to the City's records and offering corporate research and reference services to city officials, staff and members of the public.

Throughout 2012, archives staff worked with a number of departments across the City to transfer and accept custody of official city records. These transfers included over 100 rolls of microfilm

uncovered in the Finance Department, documenting city activities going back to 1902. In addition, over 5000 individual deeds of land and land sale records were sent to the archives by the Legal Department, detailing land transactions from the early 1900s through the 1950s. Over 110 boxes of files were accessioned from the Office of the City Clerk, the Engineering department, the Planning and Building department, the Legal and Lands department, the Finance department and the Mayor's Office. All of this material has been processed, 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. Such a system plays a vital role in offering open, transparent and accountable governance.

Work at the City Archives also supports the operations of the Records and Information administration branch of the Office of the City Clerk. This year, staff in the two divisions were pleased to play host to a summer intern from the University of British Columbia's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies (SLAIS). For 12 weeks, the intern job-shadowed the City Archivist and the Records and Information Administrator, gaining practical experience in both the archival and records management programs. This opportunity allowed the student to apply the theory and knowledge she had learned in class to a real-world environment. While in Burnaby, the intern participated in the process of organizing, describing and scanning records to upload to the Heritage Burnaby website and also worked alongside staff to review and sort files, update manuals, review microfilm records and participate in heritage outreach and public programming. This was the first time the City of Burnaby has participated in a mentoring program and partnership with SLAIS and the experience of hosting the intern was a rewarding one – offering benefits to the City, the school and the student.

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMMING: HERITAGE BURNABY**

It is a pleasure to report that 2012 was another award-winning year for the Archives' Heritage Burnaby programs. On October 19th, the Burnaby Community Heritage Commission accepted an Award of Honour from Heritage BC for the Burnaby Oral History Project. These awards, presented annually, acknowledge important contributions and exceptional efforts to increase awareness of, and support for, heritage resources. This honour was given to the City of Burnaby in recognition of the work that had been done at the City Archives to digitize the Burnaby Oral History Collection. Approximately 40 interviews of long-time residents were made available online, covering a wide range of subjects. These interviews give us an intimate glimpse into the lives of the Burnaby pioneers who built our City and it was a great honour to have the work recognized by Heritage BC.

The success of this first phase of the oral history program led directly to the development of a second phase which began in earnest in September. In an effort to expand the repository and continue developing the unique – yet collective – community story, the City of Burnaby Archives and the Burnaby Village Museum partnered to undertake a new phase of oral history interviews. Throughout the fall, the Burnaby Heritage Partners solicited long-time Burnaby residents to share their stories of growing up in Burnaby during the booming period of growth and development following World War II. It is hoped that the new oral history program will capture the stories of these residents who helped transform Burnaby into the modern city we know today. Work on this second phase of the program is almost complete, with more than 30

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new interviewees participating in the program. These new interviews will be available for streaming online early in 2013.

In addition to the oral histories, several new archival collections have been added to the online database over the past year including a collection of photographs from *The Columbian* newspaper dating from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Working with the New Westminster Museum and Archives, Burnaby staff were able to track down and sign agreements with the newspaper photographers allowing us to display their images on the Heritage Burnaby website. This rich anthology illustrates a more recent history of our City – a period which is often overlooked – and will be a valuable resource for our community.

The new additions to the collections and the growing resources being made available online have had a tremendous effect on access to – and use of – the archival reference and research services. User requests have increased again this year, another 30% growth in number over last year. The Heritage Burnaby website has generated tens of thousands of hits, with hundreds of individuals contacting the Archives to learn, explore, document and locate evidence of past actions, decisions and activities undertaken in and by the City and its citizens throughout its rich history.

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMMING: OUTREACH**

Public outreach and engagement plays an increasing role in the work at the Archives. In 2012, new social media tools were capitalized upon to take our story to new audiences. Early in the year, representatives of the Google-affiliated social media platform known as HistoryPin contacted the City of Burnaby Archives with a request to participate in their site. Using Google Maps as a platform, the site allows users to ‘pin’ photos onto the map so that the past and present are juxtaposed. Having noted the extensive collection available on the Heritage Burnaby website, the HistoryPin group suggested a partnership with them that would see our photographs uploaded to their site – using social media to interact with various demographics and promote wider access. The site is not only free to use, but the user maintains copyright and ownership over all of the files that are uploaded.

During the summer months, a “City of Burnaby Archives” channel was created on the site and approximately 150 photographs were uploaded. Although only a small sampling of the photographs that are available through the Heritage Burnaby website, the ones chosen were representative of each neighbourhood in the city and highlighted the rich inventory of historic places, buildings and assets within Burnaby. In the time since the photographs were uploaded, almost 2000 individuals have visited our channel, showing an increased awareness of the archives and the resources it can provide to the public. Overall, by participating in HistoryPin, the City of Burnaby Archives is ensuring that different avenues are available – and different audiences are reached – to promote use of and access to the City’s municipal and community records.

The City Archives has hosted or participated in a number of events in the community throughout the year showcasing our programs and operations. Two sold out “History in the Heights” presentations were offered – joint ventures involving the Archives, Museum, Library and Burnaby Heights Neighbourhood Association. Close to two hundred people attended the

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presentations, enjoying a slideshow of the Heights neighbourhood and its development and a virtual tour of the resources and material available for independent research and discovery.

In December, staff participated in a panel presentation in partnership with the Burnaby Art Gallery marking the opening of the Art Gallery showcase featuring photographer Bill Jeffries. The photographs – taken at the swap meets held at the Lougheed Drive-In Theatre during the 1970s – were donated to the archives by Jeffries in 2011 and were chosen for an Art Gallery show held at the Bob Prittie Library, opening in December. This well-received presentation capped off another successful year for the City Archives outreach and public programming events.

## CONCLUSION

As we move into the New Year, we build on the infrastructure already in place and continue to develop programs and plans to capture and promote Burnaby's recorded history. In 2013, a new wave of digitization work will be undertaken – this time focused on the moving image collection held by the City. We will also continue to work with heritage partners throughout the city to offer coordinated and appropriate programs that celebrate our collective memory.

The resources that have been provided to fund these initiatives and to maintain an archival assistant position remain an integral component of the archives' success. The ability to offer rich programs and resources to the community relies on the continued guidance and support of the Community Heritage Commission and Burnaby City Council. Under their direction, our current and future work will preserve and celebrate these rich and valued cultural assets.

Respectfully submitted,

Arilea Sill  
CITY ARCHIVIST

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