

Chair's Report for AGM June 24, 2022

Through Education and Advocacy, to encourage the conservation and reuse of structures, districts and landscapes of architectural, historic and cultural significance, to inspire and benefit Ontarians.

2018-2022 Strategic Plan Goals

The Strategic Directions and Key Priorities operationalize Architectural Conservancy Ontario's mission and as such should serve as a foundation for planning for the foreseeable future.

This list is reflective of some of the major initiatives since the past AGM.

1. Responsible Financial Reporting

- Attended Finance Committee Meetings to assist in the work of ensuring CRA Compliance.

2. Scalable Long Term Development and Fundraising

- After our Development Coordinator left ACO, I took on the role of helping to manage the Artsvest Program which was completed at the end of 2021. Artsvest matched donations raised by our Development Coordinator with a commitment for mentoring and webinar attendance which I undertook.
- Assisted in the hiring of a new Development Coordinator.

3. Well Stewarded Branch Development

- Still working on setting up attendance at Branch meetings which include emails and phone calls with Branch Chairs and representatives.
- Cambridge and Clarington meetings scheduled.
- Attended Cobourg & East Northumberland AGM and Board meetings.
- Attended Windsor Branch meeting
- Visited the Ehrenwort Trail Tour in the Clarington Branch.
- I was the guest speaker at the inaugural meeting of the Prince Edward County Branch. I presented a visual presentation on the importance and responsibilities of being a Branch of ACO.

4. Engaging Communications: Connect with Membership; Tell our story; Promote the value of What We Do

- Nutshell articles on Century Manor, Ontario Place, Bradford Bypass and a book review.
- Chair's Report in Acorn
- Attend Committee Meetings to get to know the work that is done; Ontario Place Committee, Policy Committee, Governance and Nominating Committee, Finance Committee, Human Resources Committee, Government and Community Relations Committee
- Ongoing work to set up an Education Committee including soliciting new members.

5. Powerful Advocating with Government and other Bodies

- Letters: a) to Lisa Macleod asking that work be stopped at Ontario Place and that leases not be signed with tenants until SCP is in place, b) asking for the designation of the Lower Landing Site on the east shore of the Holland River and c) re: the Affordability Task Force report.
- Emails: to Infrastructure Ontario re: Brookside in Cobourg
- Media Releases: Lower Landing site of the Holland River, Ontario Place, The Housing Affordability Task Force Report, and ACO was a signatory to an ad in the Toronto Star to Stop the 413.
- Media Interviews: Ontario Place (2 interviews for print publications)) and one on Camp Samac (television) and Talk Radio on Housing Affordability Task Force Report
- Ontario Land Tribunal Hearing on Camp Samac
- Meetings: Ontario Place Redevelopment, Ontario Place meetings with Timmons Martell and Marcus Letourneau on Strategic Conservation Plan for Ontario Place, Ontario Place Visioning Workshops, Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries meetings, with MPP David Piccini re: Brookside
- National Trust Program Committee for the October Conference
- Webinars: Ontario Not for Profit Training and COP 26 on the Climate Heritage Network and numerous Regeneration Works, Learn Building Science Webinar on the retrofit and repurposing of the Westinghouse HQ in Hamilton
- ERO submissions on Ontario Place and the Housing Affordability Task Force and the Official Plan of Ottawa and Opportunities to Increase Middle Housing and Gentle Density, including Supports for Multigenerational Housing.
- MPP Day: I met with 4 MPP's, two Liberal and two Conservative
- Was a guest speaker for the Canadian Federation of University Women on the topic of ACO and what we do

6. Operational and Organizational Review Follow-up

- Was Interim Chair for HR Committee
- Appointed new HR Chair Jyoti Sahrawat
- Assisting in establishing the Education Committee
- Recruitment for Board Committees and for the Board is ongoing

7. Embracing Diverse Groups Through Outreach

- Reaching out on an ongoing basis to find members for committees and the Board who represent diverse communities
- Webinar, National Trust Conference and Ontario Heritage Conference attendance on sessions dealing with reaching out to Indigenous communities
- Attended session from the Friendship Centre on working with Indigenous communities
- Worked with an Indigenous mentor through Artsvest

Going Forward:

1. Working with Government

It is somewhat obvious that a great deal of work is being done in strategic direction number 5, "Powerful Advocating with Government." This will likely continue to be the focus. The Housing Affordability Task Force Report has outlined a number of strategies that could be devastating to the Ontario Heritage Act. Our work through the Government and Community Relations and Policy Committees will go on. We know that we must not only meet with MPP's on MPP Day but be proactive now. We know that we also have to be involved in the upcoming municipal elections.

2. Scalable Long Term Development and Fundraising

We can see from the Financial Reports that our finances are a concern. We are using up some of our principal assets. Fundraising during Covid and now during inflationary times is a challenge. This constrains our capacity as an organization. We have financial challenges ahead to continue to be solvent.

3. Embracing Diverse Groups Through Outreach

Heritage conservation is no longer focussed on just settler landscapes. We need to learn more and be more inviting to Indigenous and immigrant groups. We need to reach out to these groups so that they can see that by working together, more can be accomplished.

4. Engaging Communications and Well Stewarded Branch Development

I have put these two strategic directions together because relationships with our branches depend upon communications with our branches. During my tenure and as a former Branch Chair, I have come to see that miscommunication can so easily happen and it is not always intentional. The pandemic has introduced stresses into society that were not anticipated. Being socially distanced might have been good for preventing disease but it has been devastating to human relationships. Zoom meetings and email may have allowed us to continue doing business but it did not allow face to face interaction. And so, like all organizations we have felt the brunt of the fallout. Miscommunication and misunderstandings have led to many problematic email encounters and phone calls. Over the next year, I hope to work with the Branches to find ways that we can all move forward on the same path in a harmonious manner.

I have learned a lot during my first year and have had some missteps. I do want to thank the staff for aiding my journey, former Chairs and all of the members for their dedication to the work that we do. ACO is a group effort and only together can we fight the battles ahead.

