



ANNUAL REPORT 2005

Submitted By:
Derek Chewka, Chair
Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee
Web Site: www.aboriginal-edmonton.com

Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee Annual Report 2005

Contents	Page
A. Summary Report	3
B. Introduction	3
C. Sub-Committee Reports	4
1. Executive	4
a) Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative (EAUAI) Partnership	
5	
b) Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project (RFAOHP)	6
c) 5 th Annual Municipalities Aboriginal Networking Workshops	6
2. Communications	6
a) EAUAC Web site: www.aboriginal-edmonton.com	6
b) EUAAI Newsletter	6
c) A Guide to Aboriginal Edmonton	6
3. Family and Youth	6
a) Nellie Carlson Youth Award 2005	6
b) Nikanihew Aboriginal Aquatic Leadership Development Program	
6	
4. Community Development	7
a) Edmonton Public Library; Aboriginal Focus Group	7
b) National Day of Healing and Reconciliation	7
c) Healing our Spirit Worldwide	7
d) National Aboriginal Day 2005	7
e) Human Rights City Project	
8	
f) Safer Cities Edmonton	8
D. EAUAC Chair Concluding Remarks	8

EAUAC MEMBERS 2005

January-August (10)

Chair Sonja Willier, Vice-Chair Angela Ferguson
David Berger, Lori Campbell, Lewis Cardinal, Karen Fox, Nicole Hetu,
Pamela McCoy-Jones, Tibetha Kemble, Gordon Stewart.

September-December (17)

Chair Sonja Willier, Vice-Chair Angela Ferguson
David Berger, Lori Campbell, Karen Fox, Nicole Hetu, Pamela McCoy-Jones, Tibetha
Kemble, Gordon Stewart, Lori Sokoluk, Derek Chewka, Chantal Favell Rubenstahl,
Caroline Foster, Gwen Muskwa-Creiton, Hali Fitzpatrick, Ray Gadwa, Wendy Walker

A. Summary Report

The Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee operates under The City of Edmonton Bylaw 13720; Whereas, pursuant to section 145 of the Municipal Government act, R.S.A. 2000, c.M-26, Council may pass bylaws in relation to the establishment, function, procedure and conduct of council committee. The Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (EAUAC) is as a volunteer committee working **“toward an equal and positive partnership between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens of Edmonton”**.

In January, the EAUAC experienced a dramatic change in committee structure with seven (7) EAUAC Members resigning for reasons that included educational pursuits, employment opportunities, and completion of a term appointment. Two of those members who resigned pursued employment with the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Accord Office. A new Chair and Executive was also appointed and were happy with the past Chair providing support and continuity to the committee this year with the following changes, a) a new Chair and Executive needed time for adjustment to their new roles, b) the remaining ten (10) EAUAC members were fairly new on the committee and the Vice-Chair in her position for the past two (2) years, c) a strategic planning session was held in late January for the year, d) the Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Accord Process partnership was identified as a priority as one of the main focus for EAUAC business all year.

In April 2005, the EAUAC experienced another change, the Aboriginal Community Development Coordinator for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (who also provides 0.4 Administrative Assistant support to the EAUAC) took a leave of absence for a 3 month period. This change brought about the need to interview for and temporarily fill the position and to modify and adjust as needed. Part of the challenge with the above role in its current state is realizing that the role is so vital in building community relations and in meeting the needs of the EAUAC that it requires more time than the current allotment to successfully complete the role. The EAUAC and the Manager of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion will continue to advocate for a long-term solution to meeting the distinct needs of the current role.

In August, an interim recruitment campaign was held to bring on five (5) new members, however, there were eight (8) new members that were selected and appointed by City Council. An Orientation was held for the new members in October. The 2005 year has been a tremendous year of successes and celebrations; yet one of transition and of reliance on a small number of dedicated, committed, and loyal volunteers who saw through the general business and new initiatives of the EAUAC.

B. Introduction

The Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (EAUAC) is as a volunteer committee working **“toward an equal and positive partnership between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens of Edmonton”**. The Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee was established in 1994 in a cooperative effort led by an Aboriginal Inter-Agency Committee and Mayor and City Council. The actions of EAUAC are directed by the Committee’s Terms of Reference that were initially adopted by City Council in 1994 and then revised in 1998. In 2004, the Terms of Reference were changed to **The City of Edmonton Bylaw 13720**. In accordance with the Bylaw 13720, included at least 50%, plus one member shall be Aboriginal; and, members will be selected based on their merit and commitment to the Aboriginal community, without consideration as to tribal origin or membership in any special interest group. Each appointment made by Council is for a term of one year, to a maximum of six consecutive terms.

In 2005, the EAUAC was lead by Chair, Sonja Willier and held their regular monthly meetings along with strategic planning sessions in January and October. Over the past year, the Committee has contributed greatly in their partnership with the Accord Initiative.

The EAUAC has been a part of the Corporate Services, Office of Diversity and Inclusion for a second year and extends sincere appreciation to the General Manager Joyce Tustian, Manager Mike Kroening, Project Leader, Bea Fricson, Communications Strategist Claire Ashton, Aboriginal Relations Consultants Debbie Coulter and Lewis Cardinal, Aboriginal Community Development Coordinator and EAUAC Support Laura Auger and the Executive Assistant Freida Gladue for all their efforts in 2005.

C. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Executive

a) The Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Accord Initiative (EAUAI) Partnership

The City of Edmonton opened the EAUAI Office in November 2004 and in 2005, it continues to serve the City of Edmonton in making in roads into the diverse Aboriginal community. The Accord Office has become a 'hub' of excitement with regard to the Accord Initiative where many of the planning meetings, celebrations, and gatherings were held. The Accord Office houses the following personnel: Aboriginal Community Development Coordinator for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the shared (EAUAC/EUAAI) Executive Administrative Assistant, the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Project Manager, Communications Specialist, and two (2) Aboriginal Relations Consultants.

The Initiative process included talking circles, open houses and an Executive Forum that involved consulting around 1800 people. One of the challenges of this volunteer committee as a partner was that the EAUAC members had difficulty in providing consistent representation at meetings and events that were held during work hours. Some discussion and questions were raised about the Steering Committee representatives. The EAUAC advocated strongly for a solid Aboriginal voice in this process. The Other representatives on the Steering Committee were the Federal and Provincial Governments. The process has definitely brought about new learning and a positive atmosphere of building relationships which was one of the main goals of this Initiative.

The **EUAAI Steering Committee** was created to help provide direction and to assist in making decisions for the Accord Initiative Process. The City of Edmonton members of the Steering Committee include the Manager of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Project Manager; Senior City Administration (Manager of Transportation), the EAUAC Chair, Vice-Chair and the EAUAC Ex-Officio member. Later in the year, two of the EAUAC members were added to the Steering committee for total of four EAUAC members replacing the EAUAC Ex-Officio member.

With EAUAC support the **Aboriginal Elders' Circle** was established by the Accord Initiative Team. Ten (10) Aboriginal Elders were selected to operate in accordance with Aboriginal culture in providing cultural wisdom, advice and direction on issues of concern to the Aboriginal community of Edmonton. These Aboriginal Elder Men and Women comprised of Cree, Metis, Blackfoot, and Stony Nations of the Edmonton Community and have been key to the development of building relationship and in connecting to the Aboriginal communit(ies) and people who make Edmonton their home. Their presence and participation provides the necessary support and cultural integrity at the meetings and events that were held for the initiative. The Aboriginal Elders' Council meets once a month to assist EAUAC and the City of Edmonton in building an Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Dialogue and in securing an Accord or Relationship Agreement between the Aboriginal community and the City of Edmonton. To recognize the contribution of the Elders, in June, an **Aboriginal Elders Gathering** was held in their honour for their part in the process of community building.

The most significant and important development by the City of Edmonton was the creation of the **City Council Aboriginal Declaration, A Bridge of Understanding**. On August 30, 2005 Councillor Ron Haytor read the *'Declaration-- Strengthening Relationships between the City of Edmonton and Urban Aboriginal People'*. This Declaration was approved by City Council with a celebration that followed at City Hall. To the credit and innovation of City Council, the Declaration is the first of its kind that recognizes the importance of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples with further intent of strengthening relationships with Aboriginal People. We commend Councillor Haytor for taking a great

deal of his time that in the creation of this document in gathering feedback from the EAUAC, the Elders Council, and the Aboriginal community, thereby leading by example with the City's intent to build and strengthen relations. We thank him for his leadership on taking this important step on behalf of the City of Edmonton.

The **Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Dialogue, "Dreams Are Becoming A Reality Retreat"** was held to identify 'first steps' of the Urban Aboriginal Dialogue. Participants included members from the EAUAC, the Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative, the Elders' Circle, and Senior City of Edmonton Administration who were knowledgeable about the Accord Initiative and had interest in the development of Accord principles and protocols. The purpose was to bring forward key wishes, hopes and language for a 'working' Accord Relationship Agreement document in preparing for the upcoming 'Talking Circles' and 'Open Houses' for the Dialogue Process. Another retreat was held with same members in September to bring together final thoughts, suggestions, advice in preparing for the process.

An **Executive Forum** was held for the key partners and community agencies for Part B of the Urban Dialogue process. The forum was an opportunity to hear the Aboriginal community, their perspective and plans for their future in Edmonton. The Forum information was gathered and summarized and will be used to determine planning actions in future.

The **Aboriginal Urban Dialogue Process** that included the "**Your City, Your Voice Report**" was instrumental in striving for a community-driven process. The creation of this report provided Aboriginal Edmontonians their opportunity to bring forward their voice about Aboriginal peoples concerns, needs and issues. The report summary included feedback from the Talking Circles (4) and Open Houses (5) in providing direction for the partners and community agencies for the next steps in 2006.

The **Aboriginal City Life Teas** provide opportunities for the Aboriginal Elders, members from EAUAC, the Accord Office Staff, Senior City of Edmonton Administration and other City staff to come together and hear from voices of the Aboriginal community groups and agencies. The City Life Tea includes serving bannock and tea over the lunch hour to further relationship building with the Aboriginal community and City Administration.

The City of Edmonton's plans for an Aboriginal **Employment Initiative** continues with ongoing communication with the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce (ECC) and Economic Development Edmonton (EDE), Aboriginal entrepreneurs, employment agencies, and communities. Dialogue between various community agencies regarding Human Resources and hiring practices is a definite 'pulse' in the City of Edmonton for Aboriginal peoples. With Edmonton's urban Aboriginal population on the rise, and second only to Winnipeg, the EAUAC will continue to dialogue with community agencies in encouraging stronger and successful employment opportunities from a steadily increasing labour force.

The EAUAC's **Mayor's Luncheon** is held each year with Mayor and Council provide an opportunity for the EAUAC members to meet the Mayor and Councillors over lunch and discuss common concerns and to share information. This year the EAUAC had a lot to share as we had a busy year with the Accord Initiative and the Dialogue Process. Just as important was the opportunity for both Mayor and Council to provide feedback and direction for EAUAC to place focus and energy. Feedback included: Media (advocacy role in ensuring positive Aboriginal messages); Violence Against Aboriginal Women (safe houses; supports); Edmonton City Police and relations with Aboriginal community (cultural awareness; sensitivity training); Mayor and City Council made the offer to assist by bringing Aboriginal Issues forward to other levels of Government (Federal, Provincial).

b) Rosedale Flats Traditional Burial Grounds & Fort Edmonton Cemetery

The **Rossdale Flats Traditional Burial Grounds & Fort Edmonton Cemetery** a designated cemetery is now also becoming memorial park in recognition and protection of the human remains that were unearthed at the Rossdale Burial Site. This sensitive issue has been extremely difficult is coming to a close and has proved to be somewhat of a success story for the numerous participants of the diverse Aboriginal Nations, and numerous other Non-Aboriginal Groups. In 2005, the long awaited reburial ceremony of the human remains unearthed and housed at numerous sites was completed with sacred ceremonies performed by the participating cultural groups. We look forward to the development and completion of the Commemorative Site in 2006.

c) 5th Annual Municipalities Aboriginal Networking Workshops

The 5th Annual Western Municipalities Gathering was held in Saskatoon. Attendees from Edmonton included two members from the EAUAC (Chair and Executive Member) along with six (6) other City of Edmonton employees. This networking conference enables participants to learn about the successful initiatives occurring in the 'host city' in regards to the Aboriginal community and empowers planning within respective communities. The City of Edmonton will be the host for the upcoming 6th Annual Western Municipalities Gathering in 2006.

2. Communications Sub-Committee

a) EAUAC Web site: www.aboriginal-edmonton.com

The **EAUAC's Website**, www.aboriginal-edmonton.com continues to be a useful tool for the EAUAC and the Aboriginal Community. It is used to provide information on the Committee's activities, Committee Member changes, Reports, Employment opportunities, Nellie Carlson Youth Award Recipients and current activities. The EAUAC remains dedicated to further develop and make this tool more effective in 2006.

b) EUAAI Newsletter

The **EUAAI Newsletter** is issued three times a year and is created in partnership for the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Office. For the newsletter, the EAUAC contributes in the planning and delivery given their connections in the Aboriginal community. This is a communications tool that has proved to be very effective and useful to both the Aboriginal community and City Administration. The Newsletter provides information and updates about the activities of the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative and the Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee.

c) A Guide to Aboriginal Edmonton

A Guide to Aboriginal-Edmonton is a booklet that was initially created by the EAUAC and is now produced in partnership with the Accord Initiative office. It has proven to be a valuable tool for the City of Edmonton Administration Departments, larger Edmonton Institutions, Agencies, and Organizations in providing information for and about the local Aboriginal community. Given the high number of requests for the booklet, the plan is to update the booklet annually so that the information about the vibrant and growing Aboriginal community is as accurate and updated as possible.

3. Family and Youth

a) Nellie Carlson Youth Award 2005

Nellie Carlson Youth Awards—In honour of Aboriginal Elders Nellie Carlson, these awards recognize four Aboriginal youth each year for their excellence, leadership, perseverance and strength. The youth receive a five hundred award that goes toward their educational endeavours along with a signed certificate by the Mayor. This year Aboriginal Elder Nellie Carlson, Councillor Ed Gibbons, Councillor Ron Haytor, Guest Speaker Kiviak (Inuit Elder; former Edmonton City Councillor Dave Ward), and Entertainer Wendy Walker all attended in support in honouring Aboriginal Youth

Recipients: **Lorne Ghostkeeper** and **Irene Blue**, both students at Amiskwacy Academy in Edmonton. This award is very important to the Aboriginal community and the Aboriginal youth as it is a way of building capacity for the future. They youth selected are looked to as future leaders in the Aboriginal community of Edmonton.

b) Nikanihew Aboriginal Aquatic Leadership Development Program

Nikanihew – Aquatic Leadership Program—This Aboriginal Youth Program is offered through a partnership with the Amiskwacy Academy, the City of Edmonton and Canadian Heritage. This program provides leadership and support for Aboriginal youth while at the same time takes positive steps in generating future employment for Aboriginal youth with the City of Edmonton. The EAUAC continues to provide their support of this program and by attending the annual graduation ceremony. We are hopeful that this program receives continued support by the Mayor and Council and the City of Edmonton Administration for its future potential for employment of Aboriginal Youth of Edmonton. As you know, Aboriginal youth is one of the fastest growing populations across Canada and an untapped resource with great potential for the future.

4. Community Development

a) Edmonton Public Library; Aboriginal Focus Group

The EAUAC has provided direct input to this Aboriginal Focus Group with a wide and growing selection of written works by and for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people to use. It was an excellent internal opportunity that serves the community in the area of education and literature for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal readers alike. This is one area that can be helpful in providing insight into the many contributions of Aboriginal people locally as well as to greater society.

b) National Day of Healing and Reconciliation

The EAUAC continued to support this National Event of healing and reconciliation through participation and representation of the Edmonton Aboriginal community. The EAUAC acts as host for the annual event and welcomes the participants of this event into Sir Winston Churchill Square. Last year, the theme brought into the Square, the four direction drums. It is an annual event that is open to the general public with guest speakers telling their stories of healing and inspiration.

c) Healing Our Spirits Worldwide

The EAUAC has been invited to sit on the planning committee for Healing Our Spirit Worldwide, which will be held in Edmonton in 2006. With participants gathering from across the globe, the Indigenous communities will have opportunities to plan, develop, and initiate 'ways of healing'. This international conference will be one of the highlights of 2006 for the Aboriginal community(ies) and other participating Nations in Edmonton.

d) National Aboriginal Day 2005

The EAUAC maintained representation throughout the year in the planning stages of National Aboriginal Day event. In 2005, during the Opening Ceremonies, the Chair of EAUAC spoke about the EAUAC and the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative. Two other EAUAC members in attendance also provided information to the general public. This is an important event that celebrates Aboriginal peoples of Canada across the continent.

The 2005 activities consisted of numerous activities across Edmonton beginning with the June 21st Official Commemoration, the Royal Eagles BBQ, the Canadian Native Friendship Centre Pancake Breakfast, a Pow-wow at the Hangar, a Tipi Camp at Fort Edmonton Park, to name a few and concluded with a Weekend Festival at the Provincial Legislature Grounds. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion continues to provide monetary and is supportive of this annual event.

e) Human Rights City Edmonton Project

The EAUAC is represented on both the Steering Committee and the Advisory Committee by the Chair and one other Member. Edmonton is one of a dozen global cities in North America, to become a Human Rights City. The aim is to achieve a strengthened community which recognizes and lives by human rights principles. Developing Human Rights cities is building infrastructure for conflict resolution, human security, participatory democracy, sustainable development and creating a space for active civic engagement at the local, national and global levels.

f) Safer Cities Edmonton

The EAUAC continues to maintain representation on this community-based initiative in developing strategies for community organizations to help build a safer Edmonton. This is an important Initiative to the Aboriginal community and we are making efforts to contribute to this effort as there are many Aboriginal people who are vulnerable in the inner city.

D. EAUAC Chair Concluding Remarks

The EAUAC members were extremely busy throughout this past reporting period. The Members of the EAUAC are committed to creating equal partnerships between the City of Edmonton and its citizens. A great deal of EAUAC member's time was dedicated to the partnership in assisting with the Aboriginal Urban Dialogue Process. The EAUAC Members assisted in many ways, from providing advice to assisting as facilitators in the Executive Forum, Talking Circles, and Open Houses that were held across the City of Edmonton. Their dedication and willingness to help contributed greatly to making the Your City, Your Voice Report initiative a huge success.

It is important to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the staff at the Accord Office. Countless hours are spent ensuring the smooth operation of the Accord and EAUAC Business. The EAUAC's members rely heavily on their expertise and knowledge to conduct business.

The year concluded with a commitment to continue to develop strategies to accommodate new members and with the business of the committee. In the fall of 2005 during our new member orientation session, there was an agreement that a more detailed plan of activities for the upcoming year was needed. This is being planned for early 2006. We look forward to the coming year and in continued support of Mayor and City Council in improving services and quality of life for Aboriginal people in the Edmonton.



Derek Chewka, Chair
Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee