

Press Release

CITY OF PORT COQUITLAM LAUNCHES 'HERITAGE FIRST' PROGRAM

Port Coquitlam, BC – Feb. 23, 2009... A new Heritage First program in the City of Port Coquitlam will coordinate and support initiatives intended to preserve the City's built heritage.

Announced by Mayor Greg Moore at the Port Coquitlam Heritage & Cultural Society fundraiser at the PoCo Inn and Suites Saturday night, the program has two main focuses:

- Development of a Heritage Strategic Plan in 2009, and
- Ensuring City staff, Council and local developers are aware of the importance of the City's built heritage and look for opportunities for preserving and restoring it.

"Heritage First articulates the City's renewed commitment to heritage," Mayor Moore said. "This directive will provide a new philosophy that will help preserve our community's heritage assets. It will serve as an umbrella for past and future heritage efforts and ensure that heritage issues remain in focus as our community continues to move forward."

Development of the City's first Heritage Strategic Plan this year will be the responsibility of the new Social Inclusion Committee, supported by the Development Services Department. Led by Councillors Michael Wright and Glenn Pollock, the Social Inclusion Committee includes citizen advisors and heritage advocates Pippa Van Velzen, Pat Dales and William Summersgill as members.

The intent of the plan is to provide the City with a clear direction regarding the preservation of heritage buildings, based on community input. Public consultation opportunities will be publicized to the community as they arise.

At Saturday's event, Mayor Moore also committed to lobbying the provincial and federal government for legislative changes that help protect built heritage, such as tax incentives for revenue-producing heritage buildings.

He noted that the focus on heritage is a good fit with the City's sustainability goals.

"Aside from its social values, preserving built heritage is environmentally friendly. For one, it conforms with the principles of re-using and recycling, and keeps demolition materials out of our landfills. It also reduces the demand for energy and materials needed for new construction," Moore said. "In many cases, the greenest building is one that is already built."

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