

REPORT FROM THE MUSEUM CURATOR

Re: Amendment to ARIEL Agreement

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the amended agreement between the City of Elliot Lake and the Arts and Culture Roundtable in Elliot Lake (ARIEL) for operation of the Elliot Lake Arts & Heritage Centre (ELAHC);

And that the appropriate by-law be passed.

BACKGROUND

At their July 8, 2024, meeting, Council approved an agreement with the Arts and Culture Roundtable in Elliot Lake (ARIEL), appointing them as the property manager for the Elliot Lake Arts and Heritage Centre (ELAHC). Under this arrangement, ARIEL took on responsibility for the facility's operations, including staffing, security, maintenance, and occupant oversight, in exchange for waiving rent for all occupants. This agreement was designed to reduce the City's operational expenses while fostering a sustainable and collaborative approach to managing the ELAHC.

Since assuming the role of property manager in July, ARIEL has facilitated access for the Elliot Lake Arts Club (ELAC) and the Elliot Lake Model Railroad Club (ELMRC) to set up equipment and supplies in their designated spaces. This setup period provided an opportunity to test how the building would function in practice, offering valuable insights as the occupancy agreements for ELAC and ELMRC were developed.

On December 9, 2024, Council approved the occupancy agreements for ELAC and ELMRC. Upon reviewing these agreements, it became clear that amendments to ARIEL's agreement were necessary to ensure clarity, alignment of terms, and consistency across all documents. These changes will clarify roles and responsibilities, providing a cohesive framework for the operation of the ELAHC.

ANALYSIS

During the trial period of ELAC and ELMRC occupying the ELAHC informally, staff worked with ARIEL to identify areas where ARIEL's agreement needed updates to better align with the occupancy agreements and the operational needs of the facility. These revisions focused on clarifying terms and responsibilities to ensure consistency and enhance the functionality of all agreements.

In addition to minor wording modifications and the extrapolation of certain provisions, key updates to ARIEL's agreement include:

1. **Revised Terms and Definitions:** Adjustments, such as replacing "tenant" with "occupant," to reflect the structure and terminology used in the occupancy agreements.
2. **Police and Vulnerable Sector Checks:** Updated requirements to clarify expectations for individuals in positions of trust, as well as ARIEL’s role in supervising the collection and review of these documents.
3. **New Sections:**
 - **Occupant Committee:** Establishing a framework for a collaborative group between ARIEL, ELAC, and ELMRC to address operational concerns, plan programming, and ensure effective management of the ELAHC.
 - **Premises Security and Access Control:** Defining procedures for key distribution, access restrictions, and security protocols to maintain the safety and integrity of the building.

These amendments reflect lessons learned during the initial operational phase and provide a more robust and cohesive framework for managing the ELAHC collaboratively. By incorporating these updates, the agreement now better supports ARIEL in its role as property manager while aligning expectations across all parties involved.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

As outlined in the agreement, no rent will be charged to the current occupants—ARIEL, ELAC, and ELMRC—in exchange for ARIEL assuming the role of property manager for the ELAHC. With ARIEL managing the premises, the City is not required to allocate funds for staffing related to building oversight or cleaning. Operational expenses for the facility will be covered by ARIEL, with ELAC and ELMRC contributing to shared costs such as cleaning services and internet, as mutually agreed.

The City will retain responsibility for any and all costs related to structural, electrical, plumbing, heating, and mechanical repair. While the exact costs for utilities and upkeep of a fully occupied building are not yet known, estimates from the 2024 Operating Budget process are as follows:

Elliot Lake Arts & Heritage Centre Operating Budget - 2024	
Building Maintenance	\$5500.00
Hydro	\$14,504.00
Natural Gas	\$8174.00
Water	\$922.00
Contracted Services	\$3000.00
Sub-total	\$32,100.00

Figure 1. ELAHC 2024 Operating Budget

Any equipment or maintenance required for the ELAHC will be addressed through the approved annual Operating Budget for building maintenance and contracted services. Additional upgrades or enhancements may be pursued through capital budgeting or external funding and grant opportunities.

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Amending ARIEL's agreement as property manager for the ELAHC aligns with the City's strategic plan to support community volunteerism and foster the growth of non-profit organizations. Volunteerism plays a critical role in sustaining our community's enduring vitality, and by empowering ARIEL to manage the ELAHC, the City reaffirms its commitment to cultivating a vibrant arts and cultural landscape. This partnership benefits both the organizations and the community: it allows ARIEL to oversee a stable and collaborative environment for ELAC and ELMRC to expand their memberships and activities, while enhancing the community through public art, workshops, and enriching cultural programs.

SUMMARY

The amendments to ARIEL's agreement as property manager of the ELAHC are crucial for aligning the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved, ensuring smooth operation of the facility. By incorporating insights gained from the trial period with ELAC and ELMRC, along with feedback from ARIEL, these changes provide clarity and consistency across all agreements, enhancing communication and collaboration.

With the updated agreements in place, ARIEL, the City, and the occupant groups are well-positioned to manage the ELAHC effectively, ensuring its continued success as a vibrant and accessible arts hub. Staff recommend that Council approve the updated agreement with ARIEL, as well as the finalized occupancy agreements with ELAC and ELMRC, to support a unified and sustainable approach to managing the ELAHC.