Date: August 13, 2019  
Report No. 2019-460

To: Chair and Members  
Committee of the Whole – Operations and Administration

From: Sandy Jackson  
General Manager, Community Programs, Parks and Recreation

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item [x]  
Item For Consideration []

2.0 Topic  
Bell Homestead National Historic Site 2018 Annual Report [Financial Impact - None]

3.0 Recommendation

That Staff Report 2019-460 titled “Bell Homestead National Historic Site 2018 Annual Report” BE RECEIVED.

4.0 Purpose and Overview

This report is intended to provide members of Council with an annual update on the programs and activities undertaken by the Bell Homestead National Historic Site in 2018 and to provide information on the community special events planned for 2019.

5.0 Background

The Bell Homestead, buildings and grounds, was deeded to the Brantford Board of Park Management by the Bell Telephone Memorial Association in 1909, to be maintained by the Board and its successors in perpetuity as a public property and a memorial of the invention of the telephone in Brantford. The Homestead
was officially dedicated to the Parks Board by the Governor General of Canada on October 24th, 1917. The Homestead was opened to the public in 1910. Today it includes three historic buildings and an eclectic collection of original Bell family and period artifacts as well as exhibits showing the evolution of early telephony. The site also comprises rural parkland that reflects the Bell's 1870s farmstead and visitor centre that includes the Phone Booth Museum Store, the Exchange Café and programming space.

The Homestead was declared a Canadian National Historic Site by HM Queen Elizabeth II on June 28th, 1997. The Henderson Home, relocated to the Homestead property in 1969, is provincially designated by the Ontario Heritage Trust as Canada's First Telephone Business Office. In 2010, the site was re-dedicated to the Parks and Recreation Department by the Lt. Governor of Ontario in celebration of the Homestead’s 100th anniversary. For 108 years, building maintenance and artifact preservation, grounds development and maintenance, and site programming have been managed by Brantford Parks and Recreation.

6.0 Corporate Policy Context

Community Strategic Plan Goal #2: High Quality of Life & Caring for All Citizens by providing well-maintained cultural and heritage assets.

Community Strategic Plan Goal #3: Managed Growth & Environmental Leadership by protecting and enhancing a significant heritage monument.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan: 4.4.10.2 Bell Homestead National Historic Site.

7.0 Input From Other Sources

There is no input from other sources.

8.0 Analysis

As outlined in Appendix “A” Bell Homestead Annual Report, 2018 was an exceptional year of programming at the Bell Homestead with overall attendance reaching desired goals. Site upgrades, including the completion of a new accessible parking area, conservation treatments to original Bell family artifacts, the growth of interpretive tours, education programs and the Bell Summer Theatre Festival, the development of a five year strategic plan, and the
recognition of the volunteers that assist staff with the delivery of programs are noted in the annual report.

Whether from within or outside of the Brantford community, the over 14,000 individuals that participated in the programs and services provided by the Bell Homestead in 2018, left with a greater understanding and appreciation of Alexander Graham Bell, his family, and their accomplishments. As such, the site continued to achieve its mission of: “Inspiring discovery and learning through the influential lives of the Bell family that gave rise to Brantford’s distinction as ‘The Telephone City’.”

9.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

10.0 Conclusion

This report provides Council with information related to the 2018 operations of the Bell Homestead National Historic Site and the planned community special events for 2019.

Sandy Jackson, General Manager, Community Programs, Parks and Recreation

Brian Hughes, Director, Parks Services

Judy Wong Page, Manager Administration and Cemeteries

Brian Wood, Curator

Attachments:

Appendix “A” - Bell Homestead National Historic Site Bell’s Bulletin and Annual Report 2019

Copy to: Sylvia Chupka, Chair, Bell Homestead Committee
In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required [ ] yes [x] no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk [ ] yes [x] no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? [ ] yes [x] no