

COUNCIL REPORT

M&C No.	2018-313
Report Date	November 08, 2018
Meeting Date	November 19, 2018
Service Area	Corporate Services

His Worship Mayor Don Darling and Members of Common Council

SUBJECT: Review of Municipal Exceptional Citizen Recognition Awards

OPEN OR CLOSED SESSION

This matter is to be discussed in open session of Common Council.

AUTHORIZATION

Primary Author	Commissioner/Dept. Head	City Manager
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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Common Council:

- a) Receive this report for information.
- b) Direct the Common Clerk to prepare a Freedom of the City Policy to enable the award be granted to exceptional individuals and groups, including military and cadet units.
- c) Strike an Award Committee consisting of two council members and one designated staff to prepare an award program for citizen recognition.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HISTORICAL FREEMAN OF THE CITY OF SAINT JOHN

Royal Charters were a means to provide for Colonial Government. The City of Saint John Royal Charter, dating back to 1785 provided for Freeman of the City. This distinction was an essential requirement for all who wished to carry on business and trade in the City. The Charter provisions to grant Freemen of the City were abolished by an act of the legislature in 1870.

The 1901 Act to amend the Charter transformed the medieval practice of granting freemen privileges and allowed the City to confer Freedom of the City upon any person for the purpose of Honorable Distinction by unanimous vote.

MODERN FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF SAINT JOHN

From 1901 to date the City has awarded the Freedom of the City to 179 people, including: Charles I. Gorman, World Speedskating Champion (1926); Kenneth Colin Irving, Industrialist (1984); H.M.C.S Brunswicker, Naval Reserve Unit (1985). Today this is an entirely ceremonial award given by the City to acknowledge

those who have served in some exceptional capacity, or upon any whom the City wishes to bestow an honor.

OTHER MUNICIPAL AWARDS

Other municipalities recognize community members by various awards, such as the Order of Moncton, the Mount Pearl Citizen of the Year, and the City of Vancouver Freedom of the City. A review of other municipal exceptional citizen recognition programs is included in Appendix "A".

SELECTING SUITABLE AWARDS

To enable proper consideration to an Awards Program suitable to the needs of Council, it is suggested the work be referred to a committee consisting of two members of council and designated staff.

FREEDOM OF THE CITY POLICY

To enable proper consideration of Freedom of the City, it is suggested that the Clerk's Office be directed to draft a Freedom of the City Policy. The policy should include provisions for awarding the Freedom of the City to military units and exceptional individuals.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTION

October 22, 2018 RESOLVED that the matter Freedom of the City Award / Citizen of the Year Award be referred to the Common Clerk for research and a report on the context of the Freedom of the City and other alternate awards such as citizen of the year award.

REPORT

HISTORY AND ORIGINS

Freeman Privileges under the Royal Charter of the City of Saint John

In Saint John the tradition of granting "Freeman of the City" was conceded by Royal Charter. The tradition of Freemen goes back many centuries (The City of London 1237), when the citizens of towns and cities would be granted valuable rights to trade, and other privileges conceded by royal charters. The medieval term "freeman" meant someone who was not the property of a feudal lord but enjoyed privileges such as the right to earn money and own land. Town dwellers that were protected by the charter of their town or city were often free.

A Charter amendment enacted in 1870 abolished the making of Free Citizens of the City of Saint John.

An amendment in 1901 allowed the City to transition from the freemen ceremony that extended rights to trade and other privileges to the modern ceremony that authorizes the Common Council of the City of Saint John to confer

the Freedom of the said City upon any person or persons for the purpose of Honourable Distinction.

From 1843 to 1901 seven amendments to the Royal Charter's Freeman of the City provisions were enacted by legislature:

- An Act for the amendment of the Charter of the City of Saint John, (1843) v Vict., c. 35
- An Act to establish a Register of Freemen of the City of Saint John in lieu of the Register lately destroyed by fire, (1843) 6 Vict., c. 37
- An Act in further amendment of the Charter of the City of Saint John, (1849) 12 Vict., c. 68
- An Act relating to non-resident Freemen of the City of Saint John, (1856) 19 Vict., c. 53
- An Act in further amendment of the Charter of the City of Saint John, (1870) 33 Vict., c. 4
- An Act to explain and amend the Law relating to the granting of Business Licenses in the City of Saint John, (1881) 44 Vict., c. 47
- An Act to Authorize the Common Council of the City of Saint John to confer the Freedom of the said City upon any person or persons in certain cases, (1901) 1 Edw. 7, c. 44

The City has in its possession the **Register of Freemen**. In it is recorded the list of every person who received Freeman of the City from 1785 until the granting of Freemen was abolished in 1881. It also lists the recipients who received the Freedom of the City from 1901 to date.

Freedom of the City for Individuals

The Freedom of the City has been awarded to numerous individuals since 1901. Some notable recipients are: Charles I. Gorman (1926) World Speedskating Champion; The Rt. Hon. William Maxwell Aitken (1928) Lord Beaverbrook Foundation / Philanthropist; The Rt. Hon. Richard Bedford Bennett, Prime Minister (1933); Louis Burt Mayer (1939) Film Magnate; Fred Ross (1999) Visual Artist; J.K., Jack and Arthur Irving (2012) Business Leaders.

Traditionally, a ceremony has been held for the Freedom of the City recipient and a formal dinner/banquet has been arranged. The Mayor and Council attend the event and a number of guests are invited to honour the recipient.

The City does not have a Policy to establish the process for awarding the Freedom of the City. The enabling statute only states that the Freedom of the City may be bestowed upon any person or persons for the purpose of Honourable Distinction, by unanimous vote of Council. It is suggested that for consistency and transparency the City consider a Freedom of the City policy. The policy would address:

- Conditions for Award of Freedom of the City
- Nomination Process
- Forms of Recognition.

A sample Freedom of the City Policy from the City of Vancouver is attached as a precedent. (Appendix “B”)

Freedom of the City for Military Units

The Freedom of the City, in military terms, is an honour conferred by a city council upon a military unit, which grants that unit the privilege of marching into the city "with drums beating, colours flying, and bayonets fixed". The ceremony represents a military tradition that began in England during the 15th century and is still an important part of the traditions of the Canadian Army today. During the War of Roses in England, cities were constantly endangered by invading military units from one side or the other. Before a city would admit a military unit inside its walls, the Chief Constable would demand to know the reason the soldiers wished to enter the city, then escort their commander to the chambers of the city council. If the city leaders felt the unit could be trusted, it was granted the privilege known as “The Freedom of the City”.

The Mayor plays an important ceremonial role in this event by giving greetings to the military units, inspecting the units and presenting the Freedom of the City certificates.

Freedom of the City for Cadet Units

It is important to note that the cadet units are not considered military units. They can be described as civilian organizations supported and funded by a national civilian organization. In 2017 The City granted Freedom of the City to nine Greater Saint John area cadet units.

Other Municipal Awards

There are many ways to honour community champions and persons of honorable distinction through an awards program. It is suggested that should Council want to investigate a Council Awards Program, a committee should be struck to discuss the matter and present their finding to Council. It is recommended that the Awards Committee be comprised on two council members and one staff resource.

A review of other municipal exceptional citizen recognition programs is included in Appendix “A”.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Vibrant City – Invest in Cultural experiences that Create a Sense of Pride

SERVICE AND FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

N/A

INPUT FROM OTHER SERVICE AREAS AND STAKEHOLDERS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

NONE