



February 27, 2015

Mr. Rob McGowan, Acting CAO
53109A Highway 779
Parkland County, AB T7Z 1R1

Dear Mr. McGowan,

As you are aware, the Multicultural Heritage Centre is a not-for-profit Agricultural Society that has been serving Parkland County, Stony Plain and Spruce Grove for over 40 years. Parkland County has been a strong supporter of the Multicultural Heritage Centre over this time, and we thank you for that support. In return we believe that with the help of thousands of volunteers, associates and business partners, we have created a unique organization that has contributed much to this area. Certainly that has been our focus. We work hard to make this happen.

Part of our mandate has been to record the history of our area. The Multicultural Heritage Centre has for 40 years collected, organized, curated, stored and managed the area history... more than 100 years of Parkland County history are located within the Multicultural Heritage Centre Archives. Archival material is measured in feet and we estimate over 200 feet of material/records forms the archives. These records are made up of private donations, business & organizational historical donations, newspapers and clippings files, maps and technical drawings, historic site inventories, family, church, school and cemetery histories and community history books. We have over 2000 photos and over 40 audio/video recordings. We make this material available to the public on a supervised basis. (For additional information please refer to the Multicultural Heritage Centre Archives document attached.)

Over the last number of years government funding for not-for-profits has been decreasing. We are receiving significantly less today from the provincial government then we received a decade ago. This naturally imposes some difficulties and problems, specifically as it relates to core operating costs. We attempt to be as frugal as we can; yet we are now at a crossroads where we must make some decisions as to which unsupported services we can continue to provide for the community.

Heritage Agricultural Society, Box 2188, 5411 - 51 Street, Stony Plain, AB, T7Z 1X7
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Charity #10747 8760 RR0001





One of the areas where we can reduce costs would be to move the archives to the Provincial Archives of Alberta. We really do not want to do that because regional archival collection would cease and it would remove easy access to the material away from our area and our people.

There are other possibilities. For example,

1. Parkland County could take over responsibility for the archives, move them to a facility of your own and cause them to be preserved, maintained and grow, and continue to have them available to the public. This would cost at minimum \$85,000 annually, with the additional up-front cost of providing a public space for research and an appropriately climate controlled space/environment for preparation, preservation and storage.

OR

2. Parkland County can *contract* with us to maintain, grow and provide public access, in Parkland County's name and under Parkland County's signage. In this scenario Parkland County would provide an additional sum of \$85,000 annually to the Multicultural Heritage Centre.

OR

3. The Multicultural Centre can discontinue the collection of Parkland County archives and history and send them to the Provincial Archives. The public will still be able to access the Parkland County history, but not within the County and at their cost (money and time).

While doing step Number 3 is very far removed from our desires, our current financial reality requires we seriously consider which unfunded services can continue to be provided to the tri-region. We are writing this letter to you to bring you up to date and ask you to consider steps 1 and 2. If either one is acceptable to you please let us know by April 1, 2015.

Thank you for your consideration of these points. Please let us know your thoughts at your earliest.

Yours truly,


Judy Unterschultz
Executive Director

cc Mayor Rod Shaigec

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Multicultural Heritage Centre Archives

What are Archives?

Archive records are *one of a kind* documents consisting of correspondence, photographs, meeting minutes, financial records, audio/video tapes and a variety of other information. These records present a picture of what personal or community life was like and create a documentary history of the past, which is then available for research by the public now and in the future.

The archival space is "dedicated to caring for the records, safe from environmental and human hazards, with facilities and equipment to ease the work of the archivist and encourage use by the public." This is a permanent institution, not a special one-time project.

Archives at Multicultural Heritage Centre

Forty years ago when the Multicultural Heritage Centre first opened, a *Library and Archives Room* was created on the top floor of the brick building. Over the years records and information relating to families, businesses and the community has been collected. Some of that information has formed the **Family History Files** and the **Community History Files**. The Centre has conducted **Historic Sites Inventories** recording important information about the farms in the area, creating audio and video recordings of early life and settlement in the county and collecting photographs showing the ups and downs of living in a new area. **Homesteading maps, County maps and family history files** makes it possible for someone to come and research the first place their ancestors settled and to learn about their life. The Centre also collects **personal records** of local people and **local business records**.

Other archival work is gathering information on local families. Files have been created of **pioneer families** along with a number of **genealogical records, audio & videotapes and photographs**. The work of gathering of information and stories is ongoing. What is happening today will be the history researched 50 years from now.

Furthermore the community history files are constantly being upgraded with new information. This weekly work includes **cross-referencing** names and places to other records held within the organization.





Multicultural Heritage Centre Archives

Keeping archival records is a complex process that involves various aspects of maintaining and preserving current records and gathering new records. However, this means that people can come to request information and learn about their families, corporations and businesses can seek out early records and future generations will have a wealth of records and information relating to life in our area.

The role of the Multicultural Heritage Centre Archives is to preserve records and make them available for people to use, inclusive of staff to support individual or corporate requests. Individual requests generally are completed within the day, but corporate requests can take weeks of research through our archival information and records. This is a specialized profession and requires specialized tools. Space is required to sort and organize the records, space is required to conserve and protect delicate documents, and space is required to store and secure the organized records.

