

Preserving heritage vital for city: Mayor



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Watch mayor speak to historical group

GALEN EAGLE
Examiner Staff Writer

Mayor Daryl Bennett praised the efforts of the Peterborough Historical Society while giving a keynote speech at the group's annual general meeting Tuesday night.

"A city that does not respect its built heritage will not long respect itself," Bennett told the group of about 75 people at Princess Gardens. "That elegant idea is, of course, at the heart of your work."

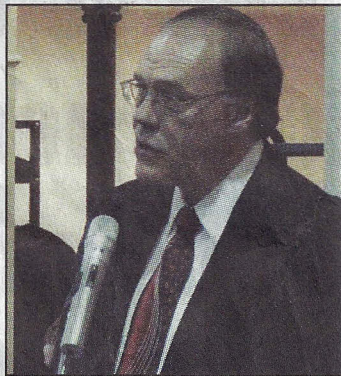
Bennett spoke about the importance of recognizing and preserving the city's built, natural and cultural heritage.

"The clock tower becomes a beacon. The Hunter Street Bridge becomes a link. The river becomes an artery," he said. "People who come to visit the city seem to have an immediate understanding of this and I am amazed how frequently they remark on our heritage and on the impact it has on them."

Groups such as the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee and the Peterborough chapter of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario help ensure city council receives sound advice about heritage buildings, Bennett explained, while the heritage preservation office helps owners of heritage buildings preserve their properties.

The city spends more than \$5 million annually on arts, culture and heritage, he added.

"That's about \$65 per person ... a number that makes us one of the highest-ranking municipalities in



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Mayor Daryl Bennett spoke to the Peterborough Historical Society on Tuesday night during the group's general annual meeting at Princess Gardens.

Ontario," he said.

The city's community grants program offers financial assistance to non-profit, community based organizations for services that include the arts, culture and heritage and the city supported 214 such groups last year, Bennett said.

Volunteers who dedicate their time to preserving the city's heritage are a boon to the community, Bennett said.

"How do we value your worth? Because you are not working for money, it does not make you worthless. In fact, it makes you priceless," he said.

Bennett concluded with an update on the city's municipal cultural plan, which focuses on the role culture can play in creating a liveable, sustainable community with a vibrant downtown and healthy neighbourhoods.

"The plan is one of the most interesting projects underway in the city," he said. "We are making excellent progress on this file and I have every expectation it will be viewed by all as a credit to the city."

geagle@peterboroughexaminer.com

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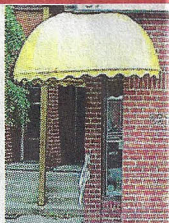
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