

# Edmonton Combative Sports Commission

## Annual Report – 2022 Accomplishments

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## Section 1: Message from the Chair

The 2022 year was challenging for the Edmonton Combative Sports Commission (the “Commission”) as well as the professional combative sports community. In the early months of the year the Covid-19 pandemic was once again an impediment to the ability to host events due to the emergence of the Omicron variant. These disruptions continued to pose problems for the professional combative sports community, impacting athlete’s ability to train and for gyms to stay open.

As the pandemic restrictions began to lift towards the spring of 2022 there appeared to be some renewed interest within the local combative sports community to perhaps return to hosting events, however, on August 5, 2022 the City Administration announced that it was implementing a nine-month “pause” on accepting applications on promoter licenses and event permits. As a result of this pause no combative sporting events were able to be scheduled in the latter months of the year.

Notwithstanding these challenges the Commission continued its work. The Stakeholder Engagement survey and report were completed by the consultants hired in 2021 by the Commission. The purpose of the survey and corresponding report were to gauge the combative sports community’s thoughts on the policy reviews that the Commission had undertaken concerning Policies 1, 3 and 8. The Commission also held a retreat in July 2022 for the purpose of mapping out the Commission’s work for the next year and to develop a budget.

The Commission welcomed one new member in 2022 and will welcome three new members in May 2023. Over the past year the Commission has had a full complement of members. The knowledge and skills represented on the Commission positioned it well to achieve its mandate and hopefully with its incoming members it will continue to do so.

The past year has also been one of transition given the City’s re-assignment of its past Executive Director in the summer of 2022 and introduction of a new Executive Director. However, the Commission has been able to maintain a strong working relationship with the new Executive Director which has hopefully helped to ease the transition.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of all Commission members who volunteer their time and expertise to support the Commission’s mandate of regulating professional combative sports. I would also like to thank the City of Edmonton staff who support the Commission and the wider combative sports community.

Trevor Kelly  
Edmonton Combative Sports Commission, Chair

## **Section 2: Mandate and Role of the Commission**

The Edmonton Combative Sports Commission (the “ECSC” or the “Commission”) has been responsible for the regulation of professional combative sports in the City of Edmonton since 1920. The Commission is a council committee created by City of Edmonton Bylaw 15638 (the Edmonton Combative Sports Commission Bylaw). The Commission is one of three parties working together to regulate combative sports in Edmonton. The other two are City Council and City administration (through the Designated Officer position of Executive Director).

Pursuant to section 83(1) of the Criminal Code of Canada, engaging in, promoting or even attending a ‘prize-fight’ is a criminal offence. However, section 83(2) exempts “a boxing contest or mixed martial arts contest held in a province with the permission or under the authority of an athletic board, commission or similar body established by or under the authority of the province’s legislature.” Pursuant to section 5 of Bylaw 15638, the mandate of the Commission is twofold: to control and regulate Combative Sports and Events in the City by approving regulations governing matters including licensing, conduct, credentials, events, discipline, and by hearing appeals from the Executive Director’s licensing and permitting decisions.

The role of the Commission in controlling and regulating Combative Sports in Edmonton is limited to matters of governance and the Commission’s mandate does not include operational decisions or operational responsibilities. The Designated Officer position of Executive Director is responsible for all operational matters (section 28 of Bylaw 15638 sets out the extensive powers, duties and functions of the Executive Director).

### Section 3: Commission Members

The Commission includes up to seven volunteer citizen members. A member may serve a maximum of three consecutive two-year terms. The Commission will be recruiting three new members in 2023 as one member has reached the end of their three term maximums, another member is not returning for a second term, and a third member is resigning at the end of April.

Trevor Kelly	Chair	Appointed 05 2019
Tye Babb	Vice-Chair	Appointed 05 2019
Sandy Bugeja	Past Chair	Appointed 05 2017
Daniela O'Callaghan	Past Chair	Appointed 05 2018
Kevin Malahy	Member	Appointed 05 2021
Graham Smith	Member	Appointed 05 2021
Nateram Seecharan	Member	Appointed 05 2022

## **Section 4: 2022 Key Priorities and Activities**

### **Approval of New Regulations 1, 3 and 8**

Following past years' work as part of the Commission's Policy Review Project in reviewing Policy 1: Licensing - Contestants and Seconds, Policy 3: Licensing - Event Officials and Policy 8: Licensing – Medical the Commission the Commission in 2022 approved replacing the existing policies with new Regulations 1, 3 and 8. These new regulations are now in effect and will govern future events.

### **Review of Policy 5**

ECSC Policy 5: Contestants and Officials Involved in Unsanctioned Events was previously stayed in years past pending completion of the Policy Review Project. As part of the pause placed on applications by City Administration the stay on Policy 5 was noted. As such, the Commission undertook a review of Policy and has approved recommendations to the City on amendments to Policy 5.

### **Stakeholder Engagement Survey**

In late 2021 the Commission hired a consultant to assist in stakeholder engagement regarding the Commissions proposed changes to Policies 1, 3 and 8. A survey was conducted among the local combative sports community by the consultant. No concerns were identified with respect to the proposed changes with Policies 1, 3 and 8. Following a review of the report on the survey from the Consultant the Commission proceeded with implementing its changes with the introduction of Regulations 1, 3 and 8.

### **Annual Workplan Planning Retreat**

The Commission held a retreat for its members in July, 2022. The purpose of the retreat was for the members to formulate a long term workplan for the Commission for the remainder of 2022 and into 2023 and 2024. The Commission also used the retreat as an opportunity to formulate a budget for 2022/2023 which was subsequently approved at a regular Commission meeting.

Following the notice from the City of the nine-month pause the Commission has deferred implementation of some action items from the Workplan until the nine-month pause has ended.