

Edmonton Combative Sports Commission
Annual Report – 2019-2020 Accomplishments

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Section 1: Message from the Chair

2019 was a productive year for the Edmonton Combative Sports Commission (ECSC). The year saw the Commission make important connections and relationships with the combative sports community. Part of this outreach was an extension of the Commission’s policy review work and part of this outreach happened more organically as Commission members attended combative sports related events, including all Commission sanctioned events.

The Commission welcomed three new members in 2019 and one additional new member in 2020. At present, the Commission has a full complement of members. More importantly, the knowledge and skills represented on the Commission positions it well to achieve its mandate.

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that 2020 was a challenging year not only for the Commission but especially for the professional combative sports community. Combative sports events are simply not permitted or possible while the public health restrictions are required. Further, many people in the combative sports community are facing professional and personal disruptions and challenges. For example, the pandemic means that athletes are unable to compete and do not have access to their regular training and support systems. Likewise, event officials are less able to maintain their skill sets since there are no events and many training opportunities have been cancelled. The longer-term impact of the pandemic to combative sports in Edmonton will take time to assess and the impact of new covid-related protocols on the sport remain unknown.

Despite these uncertain times, the Commission has continued to push forward with much of its work related to the policy review project, but the pandemic does introduce new barriers in terms of stakeholder engagement and outreach. In the

coming year, the Commission will need to consider these factors as it moves into the engagement phase of the policy review.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of all the 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.

Sandy Bugeja
Edmonton Combative Sports Commission, Chair

Section 2: Mandate and Role of the Commission

The Edmonton Combative Sports Commission (the "ECSC" or 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. At present, there are no vacant positions.

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| Sandy Bugeja | Chair | Appointed 05 2017 |
| Daniela O'Callaghan | Vice Chair | Appointed 05 2018 |
| Steven Phipps | Member | Appointed 09 2015 |
| Andrew Lemoine | Member | Appointed 05 2017 |
| Tye Babb | Member | Appointed 05 2019 |
| Trevor Kelly | Member | Appointed 05 2019 |
| Manav Deol | Member | Appointed 05 2020 |

Section 4: 2019 and 2020 Key Priorities and Activities

Policy Review

The establishment of a Policy Review Subcommittee and the creation of a framework for the review of policies was the Commission's central focus in 2019 and 2020. The Subcommittee, chaired by Vice-chair Daniela O'Callaghan, helped the Commission identify priority policies for review and create a comprehensive roadmap for undertaking this task. Over the course of 2019 and 2020, the Subcommittee and the Commission consulted with key stakeholders such as combative sports physicians, licensed officials, and other Commissions in their review of the policies most related to athlete safety since these policies were identified as high priority. The Commission has approved a number of policies for stakeholder engagement and consultation. In 2020, the Commission began considering the approaches to this phase of the policy review; however, the pandemic has introduced some challenges and the engagement work will continue in 2021.

Appeals

The Commission serves as the appeal body for decisions made by the Executive Director regarding licensing and permitting. There were no appeals made in 2019 or 2020. However, the Commission did identify the need to have an appeal policy to support the appeal process and ensure transparency. In 2019, the Commission and the Policy Review Subcommittee conducted research on appeal procedures and policies. In 2020, the Commission developed a draft appeal policy and some supporting templates. The finalization of this policy will be a priority for 2021.

Funding Request Process

The request process allows the Commission to invest funds in support of officials' training and development and was approved by the Commission in February 2019. This type of investment helps achieve and maintain a skilled, knowledgeable, and competent roster of licensed officials in order to enhance contestant safety at sanctioned events. The Commission received one application for funding through this process early in 2020; however, the applicant was unable to complete their training since the pandemic meant that the training event was cancelled.

Annual Planning

The Commission continues to take a more deliberate focus on its annual planning. The Commission held a retreat in early 2020 to devote time to exploring longer term priorities. Some of the priorities include developing education resources for combative sport participants, strategies for continued outreach to the combative sports community, and continued professional development for Commission members and licensed officials. At present, these initiatives are on hold until more is understood about the impact of covid on professional combative sports.