

King's history will come together in new book

By Mark Pavilons

The colourful history of King Township will come alive in a comprehensive book.

King council, sparked by a request from the King Township Historical Society, has agreed to provide matching funds, up to \$25,000 for the project. The funds will come from the proceeds of the annual council golf tournament, which traditionally earmarks its funds to the Parks, Recreation and Culture department.

The book is a 'legacy' project in honour of Canada's 150th anniversary. It's being heralded as a substantial, well researched and illustrated offering to the community to celebrate our roots.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini, in asking his colleagues for support, called this an 'outstanding initiative.'

In the request, Ann Love, president of the Historical Society, said they will commission author Kelly Mathews to write this complete history of King. Mathews is ready to set her sights on the entire township, after researching and writing two well received books about segments of King's history.

'She is passionate about our local history and excited about the possibility of researching and writing a comprehensive history of our township,' the society noted.

The book will cover, in detail, major events and themes, from the first land grant in 1797 to the end of the Second World War. The book will be illustrated with photos, maps and drawings from the King and Ontario Archives.

'Professionally designed and published, the book should be the perfect gift to give on behalf of King Township, for realtors and other business people to offer appropriate customers, and for residents to consult and show in their homes,' the society notes.

The society estimates the book will cost \$60,000 and they are prepared to cover \$25,000, with matching funds from the Township. They will raise the remaining funds to cover the costs.

Mathews is thrilled to undertake this challenge.

She admitted she's both excited and nervous about the task. With such a large area to cover, she hopes she doesn't leave out any interesting and relevant stories about King.

She loves the 'treasure hunt' and 'the digging' for information. Believe it or not, Mathews can't wait to spend time delving into the archives in Toronto. It's definitely a labour of love.

'It's a long process, but I'm excited for the end,' she said.

One thing that will help Mathews is the fact that all King council records are kept at the archives - every issue is noted from the 1800s through to present day. That will help set the stage and reveal the topics of discussion in early King.

Mathews is charged with presenting a definitive history, in a way that people will want to read the book.

Mathews wrote two books that centred on a pair of iconic King properties.

'The Road to Marylake,' released in 2017, provides the only comprehensive story about the creation and continued use of the former country estate of one of Canada's richest men. The history of Marylake and Sir Henry Pellatt is as much a story about Canadian heritage as it is about King Township and one of our founding fathers.

Mathews, who serves on King's Heritage Advisory Committee and the board of the King Township Historical Society, is consumed by local history. She brought us the highly detailed account in her first book, 'Eaton Hall Pride of King Township,' published in 2015.

The legacy of the Pellatt family, like the Eatons, forms an intricate and fascinating fabric of early Canadian life. It's the stuff legends are made of. And Mathews's attention to historic accuracy makes her books the definitive accounts of that era.

It was no easy task to condense some 100 years of Canadiana into this new book, published by Arcadia Publishing & The History Press. Mathews spent roughly 18 months researching Pellatt and the Marylake property, located on Dufferin and the 15 Sideroad.

The more she delved into the past, the more she was drawn into the magical stories and unique aspects of Canadian heritage.

Previously, Mathews penned 'Eaton Hall - Pride of King Township,' the definitive, compelling account of this iconic residence.

Mathews, like a modern-day Sherlock Holmes, came up with an accurate historical account of the property, dispelling myths and laying to rest all the urban legends surrounding this idyllic getaway on Lake Seneca, on the Seneca College King Campus.

Although Eaton Hall remains arguably the most grand estate in King Township, it wasn't always a residence for the Eaton family.

The castle has fulfilled many purposes, including a residential home for Lady Eaton (1939-1970); a refuge for British children (1940-1944); and, it was turned over as a convalescent facility for the Royal Canadian Navy (1944-1946). After Lady Eaton passed

away Eaton Hall has fulfilled the roles of administrative office building and academic centre (1971-1978); management development centre (1978-1993); rental venue for third-party events (1993-2011); and, a teaching and learning facility (2012-today). It's expected the book will be ready within two years, adding yet another layer to King's rich history.