



2026 Board of Directors Nominees' Statements

Due to the high volume of fantastic nominees who accepted nominations via the Recruitment and Nomination Committee process this year, candidate-supplied nominee statements are being provided in advance and in lieu of nominees speaking individually at the AGM. Per OSBA Governance Guidelines, nominations have closed and no further nominations will be accepted.

At the AGM you will be provided a ballot with all 21 nominees listed below and asked to indicate the 9 nominees you are voting for to make up the 2026 OSBA Board of Directors. Our current honorary board members (Megan Dart and Ryan Eidick) were approved by the Board for a two-year term starting in 2025 and will continue to serve through 2026. Existing Executive Board Members (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer) are intended to serve a two-year term as well, as written in our Governance Guidelines.

1. Anastasia Arabia

(2025 Board Member)

I am pleased to put my name forward for consideration of re-election on OSBA's board of Directors. I have had the privilege of working in marketing research for the past 25 years which have honed my skills as a data driven professional and a team player.

I wholeheartedly believe in volunteerism, and have participated in volunteer roles and on boards for my entire career. I currently serve on Canadian Research Insights Council, a national board that oversees my profession as well as the Strathearn Community League.

If re-elected to the board, I will collaboratively and passionately advocate for our district. I believe in discussion, listening to everyone, following best practices and the what the data is saying, looking at what other aspirational regions are doing, the importance of retaining core values and most of all - that everyone is welcome and everyone's voice is wanted.

2. Terry Brodeur

(2025 Interim Board Member)

For over 25 years, I have been an active OSBA member and the owner/operator of Boston Pizza on Whyte Avenue. My 25 +-year career, which includes a background in Business Administration and owning other small businesses, has given me a deep understanding of the challenges facing our district.

My leadership experience, particularly serving on the Boston Pizza Franchisee Advisory Council and leading successful brand-level marketing and charity initiatives, proves my ability to collaborate and deliver results. I am seeking this position to directly address the major concerns and challenges—such as declining sales and the recent closure of several avenue businesses—that threaten the vitality of the OSBA.

My commitment to action is focused on three pillars:

Safety: Taking decisive action to secure the well-being of our businesses and patrons within the BIA. Cleanliness: Elevating the standard of maintenance and cleanliness throughout the Old Strathcona area. Access: Securing, maintaining, and expanding essential parking to support our customers and drive economic activity. I am ready to translate my decades of owner/operator experience into dedicated action and revitalization for every OSBA business.

3. Yvan Chartrand

(2025 Board Member, Treasurer)

I am excited to continue serving for re-election to the best of my abilities on the OSBA Board of Directors. This will be my second year as a board member. I have accepted the role of Treasurer last month and was happy to help and contribute to the elaboration of the 2026 budget. I have previously served eight years on the board of directors of an international school in Japan with several years as treasurer, the position is something that I have experience with and understand.

I have owned a bakery in the area since 2009. In 2022, I built and moved the bakery to our present location on Whyte Avenue. While my bakery was located on 99 Street, I have been

through major roads and infrastructure upgrades and would certainly like to help other businesses that are going through upgrades in our area as that occurs in the coming years. I do believe that the Old Strathcona Business Association is well placed to advocate directly with city administration and other government agencies. I appreciate the teamwork and support of my fellow board members and thank you for your consideration and support.

4. Kim Fjordbottom

I am a long time business owner and property owner in Old Strathcona and believe this community is a unique habitat within the city of Edmonton. Small businesses have the opportunity to collaborate with each other and the city to support the arts, events, and festivals that bring patrons to our businesses. We need more support in policing, security, community services to help our at-risk population. I am a strong believer in trying pilot projects that encourage innovative solutions. In order to ensure that changes fit us, it will require engagement of our members and the OSBA should become a more visible resource for our members.

5. Jennifer Keith

(2025 Board Member)

As the co-founder of EPIC Market, a multi-level food hall and community gathering place on Whyte Avenue, I am deeply invested in the success and vitality of Old Strathcona. Since opening our doors, our goal has been to create a space that not only serves great food and drink, but also strengthens community connections by hosting events, supporting local entrepreneurs, and showcasing the creative energy of our district.

6. Kostas Koukouzikis

I've called Old Strathcona home for eight years, living, working, and supporting its local businesses, from Float House and Clair-i-tea to Barber Ha, and now Wellness on Whyte, where I serve on the management team. I've also been a client in many of its shops, giving me firsthand insight into what makes this district thrive. My Master's thesis at the University of Alberta explored Old Strathcona through the lens of the Fringe Festival, examining how neighborhood identity, economic vitality, and community life intersect.

Originally from Greece, I bring international experience from living and working in the UK and China, as well as research with the EU and UN. Locally, I've contributed through governance roles with the International Heritage Languages Association and the Hellenic Canadian Community. I am running because I believe Old Strathcona thrives when business, culture, and community are in balance. Thoughtful yet action-oriented, I will bring energy, perspective, and dedication to ensuring it remains one of Edmonton's most dynamic communities. I would be honored to serve as your representative.

7. Sonam Kumari

I have been a Branch Manager for a few years and have been a part of RBC since 2015. I manage RBC at Old Strathcona and the U of A branch. I am deeply involved in Community engagement at all levels. I am a part of Women's Employee Resource Group, Next Gen Group and have been involved in several community initiatives like Muster Seeds Foundation, Blood Donation drives, Senior Housing Community volunteering, AsiaFest, Hindu Heritage Festival, mentoring students, Food Bank donation drives and much more. I believe that I will be a good fit to be a board member for Old Strathcona Community since I bring so much experience with Community engagement and also a part of senior leadership in RBC Edmonton.

8. KJ MacAlister

I have spent the past 25 years building both knowledge and community in our local ceramics world, and I am eager to extend those same “soft skills” to the broader Strathcona neighbourhood. Over the years, hundreds of students have come through our doors, and our goal has always been to offer them a warm welcome and a true sense of belonging.

Much has changed along our little street on 81 Avenue during that time, and it has been a joy to be part of its growth and development. At the heart of my work is a love for people—providing space for creativity, celebrating their progress, and sustaining the joy of making.

It feels like a natural next step to bring the skills I’ve honed in managing and growing a community-centered business to the Old Strathcona Business Association, where I hope to contribute to its continued vibrancy and success.

9. John Mackell

(2025 Board Member, Chair year 1 of 2-year term)

It is with enthusiasm that I accept the nomination for re-election to the Old Strathcona Business Association Board. Over the past two years, I have been honoured to serve first as a volunteer Director and, in 2025, as Board Chair. This experience has strengthened my commitment to building a vibrant, resilient business community in Old Strathcona.

As the owner of Laurel’s On Whyte for 13 years, I know firsthand the challenges of running a small business in today’s uncertain economy. I work hands-on, five days a week, meeting customers, managing operations, and navigating the realities that so many of us face. I bring that lived experience to the boardroom every day.

My background includes extensive non-profit governance and leadership:

- As Director & Board Chair of the Brian Webb Dance Company, I learned how to lead through funding shortfalls and economic uncertainty.
- As a business recruiter for the Alberta LGBTQ2+ Chamber of Commerce, I successfully grew membership during the difficult pandemic years.
- On my condo board, I gained experience balancing diverse perspectives while protecting investments and ensuring long-term stability.

These roles taught me how to listen, collaborate, and champion solutions that deliver results. Looking forward, my vision is to continue strengthening Old Strathcona through OSBA-led initiatives that matter to all of us:

- Continuing the Street Outreach Program for safety and community well-being.
- Supporting street beautification, placemaking, and events that bring people here year-round.
- Advocating for better transit, parking, and infrastructure so our businesses thrive.
- Building strong partnerships with organizations like the Farmers Market, Fringe Festival, and Strathcona Performing Arts Association to keep our district dynamic and attractive.

Old Strathcona deserves renewal, advocacy, and leadership that gets things done. I am committed to ensuring our area remains the most desirable place in Edmonton to live, work, and enjoy. With your support, I will continue to bring the voice of small business owners, the experience of a proven leader, and the drive to make our community stronger than ever. I respectfully ask for your vote for re-election to the OSBA Board of Directors.

10. Amber McKinnon

(2025 Board Member, Vice Chair year 1 of 2-year term)

I am honored to let my name stand for re-election to the Old Strathcona Business Association Board of Directors. Since joining the board in 2022, I have proudly served as its longest-standing current director, and over the past year as Vice Chair. In this role, I have actively contributed to the Governance and Policy Committee, helping to review and strengthen board processes, and played a key role in guiding the creation of the Street Outreach Team, which has just been launched and we hope will serve as an essential support for safety and community well-being in our district.

As the founder and director of Naturally Inclined Health, I bring over 15 years of leadership, team building, and strategic planning experience. My professional background includes project management, organizational governance, and board development, all of which align directly with the responsibilities of an OSBA director. I have also co-founded and served on the board of the Alberta Association of Naturopathic Doctors, gaining valuable experience in organizational development and government relations.

Colleagues describe me as highly engaged and thoughtful, with strong emotional awareness, critical thinking, and the ability to synthesize complex information into balanced, practical solutions. I strive to approach challenges with open-mindedness, confidentiality, tact, and grace, these are qualities I believe are essential to representing and serving a diverse community.

I am deeply committed to fostering a safe, vibrant, and inclusive Old Strathcona, where businesses and residents alike can thrive. It would be a privilege to continue serving on the OSBA board and contributing my skills, experience, and perspective in the coming term.

11. Corinne Lillo

(2025 Board Member)

Lillo's School of Modern Music is now celebrating 62 years in the Old Strathcona area! My parents Vic and Doreen Lillo started their business July 2, 1963. I have worked in the store for the majority of my life teaching music lessons, selling a variety of instruments and books, helping customers, working accounts, internet sales, marketing, merchandising as well as a variety of other duties. I graduated from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Education degree majoring in music with a business minor. I was also on the board of OSACC (Old Strathcona Community Council) for 15 years representing the Garneau Community League. I reported the Garneau updates, relayed the OSACC updates back to my Garneau contact and typed and distributed the meeting minutes for several years. I was a member of SPAA (Strathcona Performing Arts Association) for one year. The group was originally formed from concern over loss of parking proposed in the Old Strathcona Public Realm Strategy. I have been serving on the OSBA board since January 2025.

The businesses in the Old Strathcona BIA have many concerns. The top three from our most recent survey are safety, parking and cleanliness. I believe with a strong board we can work on these issues to help improve this area for all businesses so they can continue to grow and prosper. I ask for your support to be re-elected for another term. I will continue to work hard to represent the interests and concerns of the businesses in the Old Strathcona area. Thank you for this opportunity.

12. Temyana Molina

I have over 10 years of experience in the service industry and deep roots in the Whyte Avenue area. I bring a grounded and community centered perspective shaped by years of working, living, and engaging in the Whyte Ave scene. As the assistant manager of The Buckingham, I've developed strong connections within the local nightlife, dining, and entertainment scenes

sectors, that are essential to the character and economy of our community. Right now a current passion of mine is “Buck pop” a queer night with drag and dance that I created and host along side Ladonna Stone every long weekend. We’re almost at our one-year anniversary! It’s been amazing watching it grow.

13. Sheila Nash

(2025 Interim Board Member)

Hi - My name is Sheila Nash and I'm the new co-owner of The Woodruff Cafe with my son Scott and husband Todd. I feel strongly that family owned and operated businesses are a big part of Old Strathcona culture and they're at the heart of the community. I have been actively involved in the community operating our business and I've been building relationships with fellow business owners, entrepreneurs and residents. Over the last 35 years I have participated in local events and community activities. Old Strathcona is a unique and vibrant community and as new business owners we are very excited about being part of its continued growth and evolution.

With 38 years experience as a school principal, assistant principal, consultant, teacher and Board Member of Safe & Caring Schools I bring strong leadership skills to the table focused on engagement, collaboration and problem-solving. Engaging diverse stakeholders has taught me the importance of listening, building consensus and making balanced decisions. These skills directly translate to representing businesses in Old Strathcona. My commitment to fairness, transparency and inclusivity would guide my work in ensuring businesses have a voice in shaping Old Strathcona community. As a new board member, I have a reasonable understanding of how the Old Strathcona Business Association operates and my responsibility to represent, champion and promote our businesses in the community.

14. Parker Ortleib

(2025 Board Member)

To place the interests of the OSBA member businesses first. Prioritizing: parking, safety, marketing and fiscal responsibility.

15. Andrew Rachinski

I am proud to put my name forward for election to the Board of Directors of our local business association. As the owner and operator of Arbour, I manage all aspects of the business and have built a strong reputation for quality, reflected in a 4.8-star Google rating and excellent customer reviews. I prioritize working with local vendors and believe in strengthening our business community through collaboration.

My experience includes serving as General Manager at Famoso Magrath, where I oversaw operations of a high-volume restaurant, and founding Meat Street Pies, a successful food truck business. These roles gave me extensive experience in operations, budgeting, staffing, and vendor relations.

Beyond business, I have volunteered as an organizer for the Darkness into Light suicide awareness walk and as a coach with the Edmonton South Side Oil Kings. I am committed to bringing both entrepreneurial experience and community values to the board.

16. John Radostits

(2025 Interim Board Member)

After being a co-owner of several businesses in the Old Strathcona Area for almost 30 years, and with a family history of business going back almost 90 years in the area, I believe I am a great fit for what the OSBA board needs. I am willing to dedicate the time to reviving this part of Edmonton to be an area that people love and aspire to grow their businesses and their families in. I have lots of experience in many businesses and community ventures, and have been on the OSBA board for a few months now to get my feet wet. I look forward to serving the community and helping drive business success in Old Strathcona.

17. Duncan Ross

(2025 Interim Board Member)

Looking to serve the board to the best of my abilities and ensure all decisions I make are for the benefit of all businesses we represent, not just a select sector. Being a part of the night economy, I will offer any insight and experience I may have to assist the board with making decisions. As discussed in many meetings around the Ave, a top concern is the social injustice and cleanliness of the neighborhood. The board has directly addressed this concern with the On Call team and I hope to keep supporting initiatives such as this. I'm a big believer in the continued efforts of beautification as that directly benefits all businesses in the BIA and comes from a long history of art/culture that is so unique to this area. Along with working in the night economy on the Ave, I have a long history of student activations by providing them with a sense of safety and security which goes hand in hand with attracting that younger market. It is an honour to be considered for this position and I look forward to serving our community. Thank you for your consideration.

18.C.J. Rowein

C.J. Rowein has been running the show as General Manager of the Next Act Pub since 2017, though their history with the company goes back to 2013 (clearly, they found a stage worth sticking around for). With well over a decade of experience in hospitality, leadership, and customer service, C.J. has helped shape the pub and its sister restaurants with a focus on quality, consistency, staff development, community engagement, and creating welcoming spaces that celebrate diversity and creativity... and maybe the occasional pint of Albertan craft beer.

When not orchestrating the organized chaos of the restaurant world, C.J. can be found in the arts scene - sometimes behind the scenes, but often right under the spotlight. Their background spans theatre, dance, burlesque, and drag - skills that make them equally at home in a

boardroom or a bar. They maintain strong ties to the arts and queer communities, lending time, talent, and the occasional rhinestone to projects that uplift and celebrate LGBTQIA2S+ voices throughout the city and around Alberta.

At heart, C.J. is passionate about building spaces that are as inclusive as they are vibrant. Whether they're leading a team, stepping onto a stage, or working alongside community organizations, they bring a well seasoned mix of leadership and a healthy dose of humour & flair. They hope to bring that same perspective - and maybe a little sparkle - to the future of the Old Strathcona Business Association.

19. Ric Williams

Ric's experience varies across three continents and four countries having worked for international brands in Australia, the UK, US and now Canada. Ric is proud to name Yoplait, Waitrose, Tesco, Motorola, Dairy Crest UK, Tomb Raider, BioWare and Baby Gourmet as brands he either brand managed or was a commercial business leader on. After spending 22 years client-side, Ric entered the business management consulting world with TEC Edmonton where he worked with multiple companies in various stages of life. At TEC Ric was also involved in helping the then RMWB Economic development team to develop an incubator in Fort McMurray. His work engaged and mentored multiple local businesses and early-stage entrepreneurs running business modelling and connecting them to available grants.

21. Henning Witt

(2025 Interim Board Member)

I've lived in Old Strathcona for over 25 years. It's not just my home—it's where I work, invest, and build community. I have strong relationships with a number of local business owners and operators, including our newest neighbor, Christian Mena of Bodega. As an operator of The Commercial – Blues On Whyte, I present over 280 live music events each year, bringing close to 90,000 people through our doors—visitors who also support nearby restaurants, retailers, and hotels. I also run a business advisory firm focused on start-ups and business development, with a home office just steps from the Old Strathcona library. I know this district intimately—its energy, its challenges, and its potential—across both the daytime and nighttime economies.

If elected to the board, my goal is to help ensure Old Strathcona thrives as one of Edmonton's most dynamic cultural and commercial destinations. My priorities are safety, clean streets, and building a strong, united business voice. I believe in collaborative, impartial leadership that supports all operators—from long-standing institutions to emerging ventures. I bring deep experience in both the arts and business: I have an MBA; I'm a former Alberta Blue Cross division manager; a former touring musician and production manager; and an entrepreneur working on my next concept—a restaurant on Whyte Avenue set to launch in April 2026. I want to help drive real results, without the politics—just practical, unbiased service to this district and its members.

22. Signe Yerxa

I am on the board where I live, here in Strathcona. John reached out from Laurels to nominate me. I have been thinking about it for a while and believe that with my social skills, knowing so many people who live here in the community, and wanting the well-being of the businesses to thrive, I would be a fantastic asset to the board :) I enjoy volunteering my time and look forward to possibly working with all of you in the future ! Thanks for considering me.