

Minutes – Meeting #3

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Merritt Room, City Hall at 4:30 – 6pm

Members in Attendance:

John Crawley, Councillor Mark Elliott (by phone), Vickie Fagan, Councillor Carlos Garcia, Councillor David Haywood, Councillor Bill Phillips, Jennifer Wallace, Peter Wing

Absent: Jeff Burch

Staff Liaison:

Rebecca Cann, Ashley Judd-Rifkin

1. Call meeting to order (B. Phillips)

Coun. B. Phillips called the meeting to order at 4:34

2. Additions / Deletions to the Agenda

None

3. Motion to approve the Agenda

Moved by: Coun. D. Haywood

Carried

4. Motion to Approve the Minutes of October 23, 2015

Moved by: P. Wing

Carried

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

None

6. Business

6.1. Defining Success

How – and when – do we know if cultural investments work?

There was a brainstorming session on all the ideas to consider when looking at changing our cultural funding programs. Thoughts from the Task Force included:

- Fund individual creators and their personal practice/vision (as opposed to a “directed” focus, i.e. a grant that requires an artist to produce a certain type of work or base the work on certain themes). Why? Because funding to cultural

- organizations doesn't necessarily "trickle down" to individual artists, in particularly in the visual and literary arts.
- Enhance success of local arts activity at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre (PAC) and outside of the PAC, since many local arts groups and cultural organizations will not be using the PAC and other artists (visual artists, literary artists) also have limited -- or no -- need for performance venues.
 - Enhance viability of the PAC.
 - Support new and emerging arts organizations.
 - Strengthen arts community – make it (have) VITALity.
 - Address inclusivity (with regards to Heritage and Ethnoculture, specifically) and sustainability.
 - How do we invest in ALL of culture??

R. Cann mentioned that SCCIP was described as an *investment* program in 2004 because the City had recently eliminated a 1M *grant* program in the late 90s – City Council was “anti-grant” at the time.

ACTION: R. Cann will present more info on how different arts disciplines achieve their practice at the next meeting.

Some discussion took place about the definition of culture and how it might direct cultural funding. R. Cann noted that culture is defined in the Culture Plan 2020.

6.2. Business Item 2

6.2.1. Culture Cafés – SCCIP, Individual Artists

R. Cann explained that during the Culture Plan's development, “culture cafes” were undertaken on specific topics, to provide informal discussion opportunities for the community to discuss a particular topic. She shared information from the SCCIP Culture café and the Individual Artist Culture Café and shared the community feedback, which included a question on how the quality of life impact could be shown.

Staff asked participants if the SCCIP budget increase and if yes, why? Their answer was yes because, among other things, an increase in funding will help organizations:

- Create jobs;
- Grow jobs (i.e. extended contracts, part-time to full-time positions, improve wages);
- Offer new possibilities for graduating students; and,
- Attract tourists.

SCCIP also offers an excellent return on investment: \$1 investment = \$16 of other revenue generated.

Arts community members also noted that grants to individual artists are important to improve the quality of the local arts scene and to encourage excellence. However, grants to individual artists would require a peer review process. Other suggestions offered were artist residencies.

6.2.2. What works for SCCIP? What *Doesn't* Work for SCCIP?

What works??

The Evaluation Criteria is clear, as is the focus of each “Program Stream” within SCCIP, which includes:

- Sustaining Program – to provide activities and services
- Cultural Development – to provide cultural interest
- Culture Builds Community – to provide cultural and **community** Interest

Checks and balances within the program ensure fairness, accountability and transparency:

- 10% holdback on projects and festivals
- Final reporting from **all** clients (incl. Sustaining Program)
- Staff invest time and energy in meetings, assistance, written comments (feedback) and follow-up, especially for new clients.

What doesn't work?...from experience and a client survey.

1. Underfund certain organizations and they do not thrive or survive. Prior to this year, there was no significant municipal investment in Niagara's cultural sector outside of St. Catharines. Now the Region has the Niagara Investment in Culture Program (2015).

Could the CFTF/City have discussions with other Niagara region municipalities about pooling cultural funding? Should the City ask for funding (\$100K) from the Region as flow-through funds for SCCIP?

2. Grant writing can be onerous for volunteers, emerging artists and cultural organizations run by people for whom English is a second language – SCCIP application and reporting process is demanding.
3. SCCIP is unable to fund start-ups. Organizations can't be funded until they've been in existence for 1 year in CDP; for Culture Builds Community no limitation applies but the program doesn't work for organizations focused on internal mandate.
4. There is some lack of clarity/distinction in some areas of the programs:
 - a. What is the definition of success for the Culture Builds Community program?
 - b. When should an organization “graduate” from SCCIP to F&E?

- c. How do we want to navigate ability of organizations to access more than one program?
- 5. Demand for SCCIP funding is consistently higher than supply: in 2015, applicants requested \$250,000 in funding – nearly double what was available.
- 6. Who determines funding? Should the current evaluation committee system change? Some clients were unsure of the evaluation process. 43% surveyed agreed that local artists and cultural workers should form a peer jury.
- 7. Timing doesn't work for all clients. The SCCIP timeline works but the Festival & Events (F&E) timeline doesn't work. Can the Task Force change the timeline?

6.3. F&E Evaluation

6.3.1. Where are we? Summary of Successes and Challenges

Major Issues for the F&E Program include:

- Application timeline: the deadline is before budget approval, so clients and staff planning are affected if budget changes after review process is complete. This happened in 2015, which resulted in extra work.
- Federal grant program for Local Festivals requires municipal investment for eligibility.
- F&E demands more rigorous marketing and outreach beyond Niagara but there are insufficient funds to support this, ie less than \$5,000 available per festival, potentially, in 2016
- Should the program serve for-profit festivals?

6.3.2. Culture and Sustainability – Council Strategic Plan, Culture Plan

The Task Force reviewed Council's vision and mandate within the Strategic Plan, which outlines the importance of cultural vitality.

From the Culture Plan 2020:

Cultural vitality is a pillar of community sustainability – if a community wants to attract business, knowledge-economy workers, doctors and youth it must have a strong sense of community identity, and be a place includes:

- A distinct sense of place
- Shared experiences
- Collective sense of identity, including respect and preservation of heritage
- Inclusion of distinct peoples
- Voices and stories that reflect all of us
- Self-expression and creativity that is unique to St. Catharines and Niagara

6.4. Heritage Grants

6.4.1. Past practices, results, in brief – J. Crawley

The City of St. Catharines heritage property grant program was cancelled in 2014. Until then, under the Ontario Heritage Act, designated property owners could go through a process of applying for a grant on an annual basis. The maximum grant was \$1,000 per year, matched by the individual's own money. The application process was onerous and included having to create plan, submit the plan to the heritage planning committee, and get the plan approved. Then the work could begin – they did not approve funds to people who went through the process but had already done the work. The grant also only applied to the exterior of the property to restore architectural components.

Discussion followed about the heritage grant which was managed by the City's Planning and Building Dept. The grant program was in existence for at least 10 years, if not longer. The budget was a maximum of \$10,000/year, BUT, there were usually only 3 - 4 applicants per year because the process was so onerous. Even though applications were submitted, not all were accepted and some who received in one year, were not approved the year after.

There was no active outreach for the program – as a result, many residents didn't know about it. It was suggested that there appeared to be some hesitation on Council's part to hand out money even when people *did* apply. Was this a general reluctance to invest in private property – a hesitation to help an individual owner increase his/her property value? There was a side discussion about the City's reluctance to maintain its heritage buildings in general.

Recently, a Heritage Planner position was created for Kevin Blozowski, which had been a recommendation in the Culture Plan. This will allow him to focus more time on heritage matters, which is a positive move.

Culture Plan 2020 embraces heritage and diversity as part of our “culture blend” – the challenge is that multiple departments/sections need to come on-board, and the issues of these areas are different than in the arts sector. The heritage grant program was not directly noted as part of the mandate of this Task Force, but the Task Force could recommend to reinstate it. The majority of heritage investment is in the Museum and sometimes there is a huge capital outlay for heritage buildings (i.e. the Courthouse had a 3M investment about 10 years ago).

6.5. The Current Environment

6.5.1. Culture in St. Catharines – Understanding our Assets

Culture Mapping excerpt from the State of Culture Report (2012):

The majority *number* of St. Catharines' cultural assets are heritage assets. There is a natural creative cluster in downtown, but the whole community is served by culture when a map is reviewed. Looking at Cultural Asset Mapping in the Niagara region (2007), the biggest cluster is in St.

Catharines, with Niagara Falls and Welland next: there is also a natural cluster along the wine route.

A map of all the schools where Carousel Players performed (67 across Niagara region) shows a main cluster in St. Catharines but indicates the organization performs all over Niagara.

ACTION: R. Cann will send the individual artist culture map to the Task Force. Which shows where artists live and where they work (ie studios).

How many artists live in St. Catharines? R. Cann noted a study by Kelly Hill Research that identified 1500 artists in Niagara, with approximately 350 in St. Catharines. She noted that to be counted as an artist by Statistics Canada you had to generate the majority of your income as an artist within a specific two-week period. This means an artist working as a waiter that week would not be counted. When staff did a survey of artists as part of the Culture Plan 162 artists responded. The Culture Map is based on these.

6.5.2. The economics of the Arts Centre – Will it affect the local arts sector? How?

Summary of FOPAC issues and unknowns:

- For some SCCIP clients, the new facility =
 - Higher rental costs
 - Higher potential revenue
- Unknowns are:
 - What will audiences be willing to pay? How will they respond to the box office charges?
 - Flexible deals will reduce expenses – will they affect revenues too?
 - What “cushions” do users have to offset financial losses?
 - What are the hidden costs?
 - If first year is a success, will second year be just as good?
 - PAC given extra dollars in year 2 to invest in local programming – what happens in year 2?

R. Cann reiterated the concerns she’s heard from the arts community on the above subjects and noted that other communities who have opened a new arts venue have had problems along these lines that resulted in local arts groups not being able to use the venue after the first couple of years.

6.5.3. Economic Impact of Culture

Based on a study prepared by Research Resolutions & Consulting Ltd. In 2012 for the Ontario Arts Council: 1/5 of Ontario’s overnight tourists participate in arts and culture activities, including: historic sites; museums,

art galleries; performing arts; and, festivals and events that are SPECIFIC to the city (ie not Ribfests).

Social impact of the arts was also evaluated by a survey to Ontarians commissioned by the OAC: 9 out of 10 Ontarians agree that if their community lost its arts activities, people living there would lose something of value. 8 out of 10 believe government should spend public dollars to support the arts.

7. Proposed Meeting Schedule – The following schedule of meetings has been booked. Calendar notices have been sent to committee members.

#4 Thursday, November 5	5:00 to 6:30 p.m.
#5 Wednesday, November 11	4:30 to 6 p.m.
#6 Tuesday, November 17	5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
#7 Wednesday, November 18	4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
#8 Thursday, November 26	4 to 5:30 p.m.
#9 Wednesday, December 2	4 to 6 p.m.
#10 Thursday, December 3	4 to 6 p.m.
#11 Tuesday, December 8	4 to 6 p.m.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday, November 5, 2015, Burgoyne Woods Room (3rd Floor, City Hall)

9. Motion to Adjourn

Coun. D. Haywood – second: Coun. C. Garcia Carried

Materials distributed prior to or at the meeting:

1. Council Strategic Plan 2015-2025-Excerpt: Cultural Sustainability
2. Culture Plan Research and Community Engagement Materials
 - a. Culture Plan World Café – Discussion on Diversity
 - b. Culture Plan World Café Diversity – Notes
 - c. Culture Plan World Café – Individual Artists Research Excerpts
 - d. State of Culture Report excerpt – Value and Impact of SCCIP
3. Designated Property Grant Guidelines Re: Heritage Grants Program