

The Foster Festival
89-91 St. Paul Street, Suite 316
St. Catharines, ON L2R 3M3

Speakers (3 for a total of 10 minutes)

- 1) Rosemary Hale
15 Salina Street, St. Catharines, ON L2R 3K4
- 2) Emily Oriold
56 Stanley Street, Cambridge, ON N1S 2A6
- 3) Patricia Vanstone
68 Langley Ave, Toronto, ON M4K 1B5

Date of meeting requested: November 16, 2015.

Nature of Business:

The Norm Foster Theatre Festival is dedicated to celebrating the achievements of Canada's most beloved playwright Norm Foster. With over 150 productions of his plays each year both in Canada and internationally, he is the most successful playwright in Canadian history. We will operate as a not-for-profit company (charitable status pending) producing a 9 week summer season consisting of 3 fully professional plays in the 200 seat Robertson Theatre in the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.

The Foster Festival submitted an application on September 30 for a City of St. Catharines Grant requesting \$25,000.00 to cover the rental fee for the Robertson Theatre for our first season of operation in summer 2016.

On the advice of the City's Culture Office and the management team at the PAC, we would like to take the opportunity to introduce ourselves to Council before the Budget Committee meets on Nov. 18th to review our request.

Driven by our passion for Norm Foster's work and recognizing that a Theatre Festival dedicated to a Living Canadian playwright was a unique idea, we started researching communities who might be the perfect match for our Festival and Norm's work.

Norm's writing explores extraordinary moments in the lives of ordinary people. St. Catharines with its commitment to its bold Culture Plan 2020 seemed a perfect fit, especially with the new Performing Arts Centre as the crown jewel of a revitalized downtown. As we've settled into our office on St Paul Street, we've seen a steady increase in foot traffic and activity in the downtown core. A fantastic array of restaurants at a number of price points, great parking and access to the wine route and the presence of the Marilyn I Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts as a production partner sealed the deal for us. St Catharines would be our chosen home. We have already begun to create partnerships with the local hospitality industries including Eat, Stay and Play packages which will keep our patrons in the St Catharines area for 48 hours. We are busy introducing ourselves to restaurants within walking distance of the PAC to create pre- and post- show dining opportunities. We know we will impact the economic health of the downtown core and can show in hard dollars how we will measure that value and benefit both in local and tourist dollars.

Additionally we are creating an extensive outreach program which will partner with local existing non-profits to deliver drama enrichment to the children and youth of St. Catharines as well as the vibrant community theatre population.

Norm himself is very enthusiastic about our choice of location having worked in the former Port Mansion Theatre in Port Dalhousie and intends to spend summers here in St. Catharines participating in our season and in our development of emerging playwrights.

We would like to give you a first hand experience of our passion for our work, our professionalism and our plans to help position St Catharines at the centre of the new arts based economy. As hard industry wanes, Culture has become the new steel.