

Minutes – Meeting #6

Tuesday, November 17, 2015

Burgoyne Woods Room, City Hall at 5:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Jeff Burch, John Crawley, Councillor Carlos Garcia, Councillor Bill Phillips, Jennifer Wallace, Peter Wing

Regrets: Vickie Fagan, Councillor David Haywood

Staff Liaison:

Rebecca Cann, Ashley Judd-Rifkin

1. Call meeting to order (B. Phillips)

4:58 p.m.

2. Additions / Deletions to the Agenda

None

3. Motion to Approve the Agenda for November 17, 2015

Moved by: J. Wallace Carried

4. Motion to Approve the Minutes of November 11, 2015 – *Deferred*

Will be added to agenda for November 18, 2015

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

None

6. Business

6.1. Community Consultation

B. Phillips welcomed everyone and remarked that the Task Force is very happy to have them here. R. Cann noted there was a request for an additional presentation tomorrow. The Task Force agreed to squeeze them in.

6.1.1. Presentations and Q & A

B. Phillips invited Jeff Burch, Executive Director of Niagara Folk Arts, to speak first, as the meeting has started early.

6.1.1.1. Jeff Burch, Niagara Folk Arts

J. Burch noted that SCCIP is drastically under-funded and that the idea of expanding SCCIP to fund more ethnocultural organizations is unrealistic. He believes that SCCIP needs more focus.

The Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre (FA) was established as an “arts council” providing service to and representing the ethnocultural community since the organization’s inception in 1970. He noted that if the City is interested in funding the ethnocultural groups of St. Catharines this should be done through FA, who could develop a committee and process to manage this. He noted the arts community needs its own Arts Council.

Folk Arts has been approached by local theatre groups who are interested in using FA’s facility. He notes they already have a longstanding relationship with arts sector – not just in terms of space but also in multicultural programming and anti-bullying initiatives (Suitcase in Point). He believes the Task Force should look at the ethnocultural community as: not how arts and culture funding can help ethnoculture, but how ethnoculture can help the arts, especially around: buildings and space; partnering on grant applications to government funders; and human resources – specifically, professionally trained artists from the ethnocultural community.

Questions:

How viable is the hall at FA for arts groups to use? Many groups are insecure, uncertain about the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre and so are looking for different space. The facility at FA could be smaller black-box theatre BUT it would still require significant investment. He notes that facilities have to be part of the discussion of the ethnocultural community.

Are you proposing that SCCIP not fund the ethnocultural sector? J. Burch replies that, yes, he believes it’s not the best use of resources.

6.1.1.2. Jane Gardner, Jessica Carmichael, Carousel Players (Theatre)

J. Gardner begins by noting the importance of SCCIP to Carousel Players (CP) over the years. SCIPP has helped CP:

- Invest in development of new plays by Niagara writers
- Create new work for children in St. Catharines and tour it across Ontario
- Leverage money from other sources, both private and public
- Provide accessible theatre to St. Catharines children and youth

CP spends \$60K per year on the courthouse and uses it for office space, storage, and running the Sullivan-Mahoney Theatre. She noted that the City invested \$30K initially in the courthouse capital campaign which CP leveraged to fundraise \$250,000 to design and equip the theatre. She noted that SCCIP has allowed renters – specifically, other performing arts groups – to access courthouse. In terms of performance space, CP is very concerned

about affordability of the PAC moving forward. They are actively working with the PAC to promote CP shows scheduled for the venue but are disappointed with their efforts – CP is not included in the PAC’s marketing materials to local schools.

J. Gardner and J. Carmichael urge the Task Force to recommend that Council keep expanding SCCIP. CP wants to grow. 60% of CP’s budget goes to the people creating the art. J. Carmichael notes that stability allows artists to have breath to think about art, look forward to what they can create – more partnerships mean more growth. They both note that the private sector wants to see support from municipality.

J. Gardner notes that other theatre groups are dependent on CP because they manage a space. A very important resource is CP’s staff, which has the expertise to manage a space. This is an investment CP made. CP offers flexibility with their renters because it’s not about making money; it’s about supporting and growing the community.

Questions:

Why is it hard for CP to garner support from the private sector? What time/human resource investment goes into creating a new play?

CP has very loyal donors and an annual fundraiser, but it’s harder for them to get corporate sponsorship because CP is mostly in the schools (not in very public locations) and their audience is made up of children.

J. Carmichael noted that it is a 2 to 3 year process to create a play, and workshops and community feedback are integral to the creation of new work.

J. Gardner suggested a Mayor’s Gala for the Arts (similar to galas in Mississauga, Ottawa and Toronto) as an opportunity to leverage **additional** funds from the private sector to support arts & culture.

6.1.1.3. Colin Bruce Anthes, Twitches and Itches (Theatre)

C. B. Anthes stated that he represents an ensemble of artists who genuinely want to be in St. Catharines. He notes that he and other emerging artists have a productive role as a bridge between training and professionalism. He believes funding emerging artists could encourage those training in St. Catharines (at the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts) to stay and begin to create and perform in the area. The increased funding Twitches and Itches received from the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) recently is a direct result of SCCIP investment. He noted that there is no current trajectory for SCCIP growth which means: as time goes on it becomes less and less practical for emerging artists to stay here. Funding at the beginning of an artist’s career allows for the important process of experimentation and working without thinking about the box office. For example, it takes his company at least 1 year to create new work. C.B. Anthes suggested that one

way to keep students from the MIWSFPA here in St. Catharines is to have a small portion of SCCIP funds dedicated for emerging artists only.

Question:

How did SCCIP funding contribute to your getting an OAC grant?
SCCIP funding showed the OAC that: 1) the organization matters to the community enough for local investment; and, 2) the company is reliable and their project is financially feasible.

He noted that partnerships with Essential Collective Theatre, Suitcase in Point and Carousel Players make for a tight-knit community which provides mentorship for emerging artists.

6.1.1.4. Stuart Reid, Rodman Hall Art Centre (Visual Arts)

S. Reid explained the history and place of Rodman Hall Art Centre in the local, provincial and national visual arts context. He noted it was a civic art gallery from 1960 until Brock University took it over in 2003. Rodman Hall has not been eligible for funding from SCCIP because it is owned by Brock. He noted that City support will help to fulfill Rodman Hall's potential. He commented that professional artists have expertise to share with local young people, and that Rodman Hall offers many employment opportunities for youth.

He noted that Rodman Hall does for visual arts students and professional artists what the FirstOntario PAC does for the performing arts. Some of its programming includes direct services to the Marilyn I Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, including studios for students and graduating class exhibits.

Question:

What is the relationship between Brock U and Rodman Hall?
The relationship with Brock is currently being sorted out. Rodman Hall is looking at becoming a stand-alone non-profit again in the near future and Rodman Hall's Advisory Board produced a business plan earlier this year that charts a course towards independence by 2018/2020.

6.1.1.5. Elizabeth Chitty, Individual Artist (Visual/Multidisciplinary Arts)

E. Chitty is a St. Catharines visual and media artist who has been creating work for over 40 years. She notes that SCCIP should be expanded to fund individual artists and that both emerging and established artists should be funded. She shared a paradigm comparing art creation to car production and noted the similarities and differences. She addressed the high self-employment rate amongst artists compared to the general labour force. She noted that there would be no art without artists and investment in core creators is fundamental to a civil society.

Question:

You did a successful crowdfunding campaign before, why not do another?
E. Chitty noted that it's unrealistic to return to family and friends year after year and expect them to contribute funds.

6.1.1.6. Lindsay Jack Brauweiler, Individual Artist (Spoken Word)

L. J. Brauweiler spoke about St. Catharines' emerging spoken word scene. The participant demographic is young (18 – 30 year olds) and individual artists feel that there is little help for them in terms of support and grant writing assistance. It is difficult for emerging spoken word artists as there are only two dedicated funding programs: one from the Canada Council, for which students are ineligible; and a single-tier program from the Ontario Arts Council, which means that emerging artists must compete against established artists for the small amount of available funding.

She notes that it is important to allow students to apply for funding, since investing in young people – emerging artists – is integral to help stop brain drain. She referenced the Inspire St. Catharines 2020 Culture Plan and noted that a priority is providing arts and culture access to diverse groups. Small grants to emerging artists, she noted, could help marginalized artists from diverse backgrounds (such as First Nations and LGBT) and address issues of underrepresentation in the local arts and culture community.

She believes that the City needs to find ways to market to specific groups, in a “language” (or format) that makes sense to them. She recommends funding travel grants so that St. Catharines artists – specifically marginalized or priority groups – can travel and disseminate their art safely. She believes that the City also needs to develop resources to enable people to make use of the current grant programs. She suggests developing mentorship programs to help address concerns about the difficulty of filling out applications. Ambassadors within the community could help “get the word out.”

6.1.1.7. Kelly Daniels, Wild Pendulum (Niagara Theatre Festival)

K. Daniels spoke on behalf of an emerging event being developed by established artists, the Niagara Theatre Festival, which has not yet held an event. She noted that SCCIP was hugely supportive of Lyndesfarne, her previous theatre company. She commented that the new festival will need funding for its first year. If growing a city and region is what Council wants to do, it needs to acknowledge that the arts and culture are a key reason why people come to this region. Council can strengthen the community and the economy through the arts and culture sector.

7. Date of next meeting

**Wednesday, November 18, 2015,
Burgoyne Woods Room, 3rd floor, City Hall**

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

8. Motion to Adjourn

Meeting ended at 7:01 p.m.

Materials distributed prior to or at the meeting:

1. List of all Community Consultation presenters.
2. Letter from Garden City Productions to the CFTF re: SCCIP funding.