



**Minutes  
User Group Committee  
Thursday March 3, 2011  
Mills Room, St. Catharines Public Library  
54 Church St. 1 – 3pm**

**Present:** Janis Barlow, Pablo Felices-Luna, Robert Cooper, Councillor Mark Elliott (Chair), Jane Gardner, Derek Knight, Jack Mills, Mary Jo Mullins, Sara Palmieri, Brian Power, David Vivian, Annie Wilson

**Staff:** Rebecca Cann, Rick Lane, Kelly Reichheld

**Regrets:** Kim Fiocca, Jo Henderson, Deanna Jones, Stephen Remus, Alan Titley

**1. Approval of Agenda**

Agenda was adjusted to accommodate changes in schedule.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:** To Approve the Minutes from Meeting of February 3, 2011

Made by A. Wilson

Seconded by J. Mills

Carried

**3. Business Arising**

None.

**4. Correspondence**

None.

**5. Feasibility Study – with Martin Vinik on phone**

M. Vinik provided a summary of the physical building program in the Feasibility Study, including a description of the performance and film venues. Concert Hall is planned for live music events as well as certain kinds of modern dance (without scenery); recital hall up to 300 seats for Brock Music Dept performances and rehearsals, as well as some Centre and community programming on weekends; small café with the ability to present modest performances ie musicians; film house/lecture hall for Brock classes by weekday, and as a film venue nights and weekends; rehearsal studio with storage and office space; and allowance for shared administrative space.

“Target program” column in the study is what is the identified need; the realized program is what is included in the actual conceptual program as outlined in the study. The Cost Estimates were based on the second column, the “realized program.” Major differences are in lobby spaces and support spaces, rather than in the venues themselves. Office space for SFPA is not part of the arts centre building program (on page 306).

Discussion/clarifications included:

- Page 299 – while this theatre is not part of program, the rehearsal studio and storage space are included.
- Is there sufficient wing space in the concert hall program to accommodate dance and backstage space for large companies ie choral groups, dance recitals etc. Martin stated yes, there is sufficient space and the primary issue will be a scheduling one as really large groups will need to use the recital hall for people management.
- Will it be possible to rent out the musicians lounge if not in use? – Martin noted this will depend on the future design and is a question to discuss with the architects. He noted that the more you can do of this nature, wherever in the building, the better. This is an assumed intent of the building program and business plan.
- Use of the recital hall as a rehearsal venue – is this to keep the Niagara Symphony (NSA) off the stage for nothing but performances? Martin noted that the music dept. rehearsals will take place in the Recital Hall, as there is no large ensemble studio space in the program. The Symphony, as much as possible, will likely rehearse on the Concert Hall stage – there will be schedule complications to manage, but it was assumed NSA rehearsals will be onstage in the Concert Hall.
- It was hoped or expected that NSA offices would be in the same complex – is this included? R. Cann noted this is referenced on page 306: 2,010 s.f. are allocated to arts group offices. The previous Community User Advisory group (CUAG) noted in the past that this is insufficient space for what is currently being used by Carousel Players, the NSA and the Arts Council. Martin clarified the difference between gsf and nsf<sup>1</sup> and described the intent to have some offices private, some shared and some open-concept spaces. It was determined that what is in the program is probably suitable for 16 -20 staff, not 26. It was agreed that further clarification will be required as to how much and what type of space is required for the organizations that wish to move into the facility. Martin also pointed out that some office space would more likely be developed off the immediate site, and confirmed this was true for storage space, too.
- Are there distinct dressing rooms for the Concert Hall and Recital Hall? Martin said there is some separate space, as all doubling up probably does not make sense. Again, careful scheduling will be required to ensure accommodation.
- Clarification of inclusion of load-in space, sufficient dressing room space for symphony musicians per gender etc.
- Will retail space have an affect on the space available for performance venues – Martin stated no, and that retail space is really important to enliven the streetfront of the venue so it is not dead space during the day. It will also serve the facility by generating revenue. R. Cann noted that it's tbd as to whether retail space will be a part of the development, as this square footage is not supported by the senior government dollars.
- The loading dock plan is set to accommodate a 53' truck + 24' truck, depending on elevation – this should be the minimum that we need. J. Barlow asked whether we should include specific dimensions of loading bay + the requirement of 2 bays - Martin noted this needs to be done with the architect.
- The inclusion of an amphitheatre has been picked up by the architect and the media – is this space tech free? Martin noted that yes, there is no tech support – there would be access to power, but nothing more. He noted that its use is limited to summer months and highway noise could be problematic. R. Cann pointed out that the amphitheatre was listed as a MIWSFPA program, but was not included in the budget.

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<sup>1</sup> Gross square feet (gsf) includes allowance for wall, circulation and secondary space etc., while net square feet (nsf) is the functional floor space within a specific space. In other words the difference between what's needed to build a building and useable space.)

- Dialogue about festival use of the facility took place – Martin confirmed it was not considered significantly during the Study process (Note: transitional leadership on our major festivals had some effect here).
- Where are the community offices in the plan? Martin noted they were set on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, however, this was conceptual only – the architects may identify them somewhere else altogether.
- Martin noted that the budget is very tight, so how circulation and lobby space is developed is going to be crucial to ensuring we achieve all this within the budget that we have. Budget should be focused on program space as a priority.
- Box office space seems minimal given there are 4 venues – should there not be small box office kiosks or some such at the door of each venue? Martin expects the one box office to serve all venues so that people do not enter the building without their tickets. Further discussion required – S. Palmieri noted that at Brock they needed a kiosk at the David S. Howes Theatre away from the main box office. The physical nature of the layout at Brock makes this essential. Future design of need to review how box office works well, with proper queuing, etc, to work effectively.
- Laundry facilities will be required with the Concert Hall as some artists require it – currently not included in program.
- Program currently lists “permanent physical riser” for seating in the Dance/Theatre studio, which will severely limit flexibility. Martin noted the space should be more than just a black box – there is much activity that wants an end-use configuration and this works best for dance. This can also give some staging flexibility for theatre, in a variety of ways. This venue is now a merged venue, covering both the community use venue of 125 seats – Martin noted that what the maximum use is, should be an important part of the recommendations on physical program ie mostly theatre? Dance? End-use? Etc.)
- Space for box office and crowds in Front of House seems very tight for the audience sizes. Also, wing space seems really tight to work effectively for all users.
- Is all Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) included in the study cost estimates? Page 249 suggests that some furniture and equipment is not included – this could be relating to office furniture, and certainly Brock’s FF&E are not included as theirs comes out of another budget.
- Who is writing the more expanded building program? This is part of the architect’s scope of work.
- Is marquee and signage included in the building program/budget? TBD.

## **6. Executive Director Search – Discussion with Margaret Genovese**

M. Elliott welcomed Margaret Genovese and Eric Ogela to the meeting and introductions took place. Margaret spoke briefly about the process she will be leading to find an ED for the arts centre and welcomed future emails from the group at any time, in confidence. R. Cann will share her email coordinates. A job posting will be designed to advertise the job, which will not be a final job description as there are still a lot of unresolved questions around project and arts centre governance. Posting will be distributed throughout Canada and the US. She encouraged the group to share the posting to their networks, and suggested that if anyone knows someone who might have useful insight for the hiring process – to please share coordinates with her. She is working to identify a candidate by the end of May. She noted that the following points might be helpful to those asking questions of UGC members:

- The process is open and accessible to all comers;
- Margaret is not the gatekeeper – she presents all resumes to the client;
- If anyone has direct questions please forward them onto Margaret as they’re are happy to answer any questions;

- Selection Committee, is Rick Lane, Colin Briggs, Dan Carnegie, the Mayor and Mark Elliott

Discussion took place on the hire, including length of contract, expected duration of the successful candidate in job, compensation level, legacy building opportunity, etc. A. Wilson asked whether we can meet short-listed candidates – Margaret said she prefers to do this, however, there is a challenge to balance confidentiality with community engagement so she cannot confirm this will take place. Comments were made with regard to the relationship between the ED, the MIWSFPA and the arts organizations in the community – development and engagement of both populations are an integral part of the success of the facility. D. Vivian requested that current practices with the Centre for the Arts regarding programming and student learning opportunities for MIWSFPA are important for the future ED to consider maintaining and/or enhancing. Consideration of gender and culture will hopefully be a part of the process. S. Palmieri noted there is a real culture of collaboration in this community so the ED will need to not only build a building but also find ways to further develop those partnerships in the future. There's a natural conflict between the City's focus on the building and the people who will populate that building – and the ED needs to balance that conflict.

**Action:** UGC members to contact Margaret Genovese directly with additional comments, share names with her of people who might be useful for her to speak to, and, when ED posting is released, distribute notice through their networks.

## **7. Project Updates**

R. Lane reported that the City and Brock are both hiring a project manager that will be working through Prism. A preliminary meeting with the architects took place last week – the Diamond & Schmitt team are looking forward to the public engagement process and the detailed discussions with the UGC on the needs of the project.

## **8. Community Needs Assessment**

Deferred.

## **9. Facility Tours**

M. Elliott reported that Colin Briggs has stated we can tour facilities around southern Ontario as part of the development of the project – further discussion as to where we go will take place on Monday with the architects.

## **10. Communications – Role of UGC**

Deferred.

## **11. Other Business**

Discussion took place as to how future meetings are to be coordinated. This requires further conversation on Monday with Prism.

## **12. Next Meeting: Monday March 7, 2011, 9:30 – 11:30am, Meridian Room, Seymour Hannah Sports and Entertainment Complex**

**Motion to Adjourn:** Made by S. Palmieri.