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Date: August 31, 2021
To: Mayor and Council
Author: Karen Loney
RE: Carnegie Arts and Visitor Centre – A Cultural Hub
Report No.: PR 2021 – 8

RECOMMENDED ACTION

That Council approves administration to enter into a five-year lease agreement with the Arts Society of Kingsville to use the Carnegie Arts and Visitor Centre, in form satisfactory to the CAO and Director of Legal and Clerk Services.

BACKGROUND

The Carnegie Arts and Visitor Center (Carnegie) was created to preserve a historic building and be a learning centre within Kingsville. The Carnegie has been a desired spot to promote culture and tourism and as an open space for the community to connect and appreciate the talents of many within Kingsville.

Arts and culture are powerful contributors to the Town's economic prosperity and quality of life. They bring people together through a shared set of values, traditions and histories that define and shape the community. Kingsville's cultural scene is vibrant and growing, attracting professionals, creative people and educated entrepreneurs that are seeking authentic experiences and looking for creative outlets to share their talents.¹

The Town of Kingsville [2019 Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture Master Plan](#) developed six goals that articulate the core direction the Town and its partners should strive to achieve. The following align directly with the requested recommendation action, to:

- foster an active and age friendly community,
- work with others to expand activity choices,
- maintain our existing assets, and,

¹ Town of Kingsville – 2019 Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture Master Plan

- grow arts, culture and tourism.

A recommendation and action that comes directly from the plan is to “*continue to work with the community to maximize cultural and community access to the Carnegie Arts, Culture & Visitor Centre*”.

Kingsville’s Tourism Coordinator currently manages the Carnegie, coordinates the visitor services activities, supports small businesses recovery from COVID-19, and develops messages and activities to attract and welcome visitors to dine, stay, and play. The Kingsville Music Society also rents space in the Carnegie and shares a desk with the Tourism Coordinator.

In addition, the Town leases basement space to the Kingsville Business Improvement Association until November 1, 2021. With the impact of COVID, Council approved the waiver of rental fees until the end of 2021.

In support of the Master Plan recommendations and Council’s 2021–2022 priorities of strengthening tourism / hospitality and increase programming, administration began discussions with the Arts Society of Kingsville (ASK) on how the Carnegie could be transformed into a culture hub.

The Arts Society of Kingsville was founded in 2013. They are a non-profit organization that is administered by a volunteer board of artists and art supporters. ASK’s 105 members are a unique blend of established and emerging artists. The talent range is from a contemporary group of devoted traditional and modernistic fine artists, creative writers, musicians, woodworkers, jewellers, clothiers, photographers, and many other creative arts.

Based on those discussions, the Chief Administrative Officer approved a short-term 2-month pilot project. The project allowed ASK to use the upstairs of the Carnegie to promote arts and culture and provide related services to the community. It was agreed that in lieu of rent and an acknowledgement of the significant volunteer time committed to providing services, that twenty percent of any sales or classes would be given to the Town to support maintenance or upgrades at the Carnegie Arts & Visitor Centre.

DISCUSSION

Over the two-month pilot, administration reviewed ASK’s ability to implement quality programming in an inclusive and collaborative manner.

Within two weeks of ASK receiving keys to enter, the Carnegie was transformed into a professional gallery space that included donations of professional quality display cabinets, tables, and workspaces. Policies were reviewed or developed to ensure financial accountability, members’ participation, safety and exceptional customer service. Roles and responsibilities were identified, workgroups created, and a single point of contact was identified to liaison with administration.

As part of the pilot, ASK agreed to act as Kingsville Volunteer Ambassadors and welcome visitors to the Town. As a result, increased capacity was added to providing support for tourism beyond what administration could provide. To provide further training, Tourism, Windsor, Essex, Pelee Island (TWEPI) is providing customer service and tourism training to ASK members on September 9, 2021. Additionally, ASK is recording visitor information and providing this to the Tourism Coordinator. This data will be used by administration to shape programming, marketing and continuous improvement.

From July 11 to 31st, the following volunteer activities occurred:

- Painting Picnic Tables: This project was established to engage youth, educate the community of art history based on examples of the works of well-known artists of the past plus a current Indigenous artist, and provide outdoor public art. By the end of August, over 100 hours have been dedicated to this project
- “Our Town” Exhibition: This exhibit featured subjects, scenes, and landscapes in Kingsville.
- Family Activities on The Green: ASK members led and provided instruction for art activities on the Carnegie lawn during all Open Streets events.
- Artist Reception: A “soft opening” and ASK’s vision for the Carnegie was unveiled to Council and the Senior Management Team and members.

During this time, 170 visitors came to the Carnegie, 37 artists were engaged, and 215 hours of volunteer time was given. Sales at the Carnegie provided artist income resulting in the Town receiving \$150.75 in commission. As of the date of this report for August the Town will receive \$760 for in commission.

ASK showed how the Carnegie could be a cultural hub by engaging other organizations such as the Kingsville-Gosfield Heritage Society, Migration Hall, Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary and Kingsville Music Society.

Feedback from the community has been overwhelmingly positive. One grandmother said that the family activities on the Green during Open Streets was the highlight of her grandson’s visit. One of the volunteers expressed that being a part of this renewed her sense of community.

To assess if ASK should continue developing the Carnegie into a cultural hub and be Kingsville Volunteer Ambassadors for the visitor centre, the Tourism Coordinator, BIA Coordinator and Kingsville Music Society were asked if the model was effective, and to identify concerns. It was unanimous that ASK provides a value added service that supports the culture sector, and have developed a tourism destination that should continue. During this pilot, ASK has shown that they have the skills, resources, dedication and professionalism to be the lead of using the Carnegie as a cultural hub and support the visitor centre.

In the July report ASK provided, they summarized their vision: “We look forward, as ambassadors for the Town of Kingsville, to blend history, collaborate with organizations

in the community, and to bring arts, culture and education to the Town of Kingsville, with The Carnegie as our town's arts hub".

Based on the success of the 2-month pilot project and the potential for future achievements, Administration and ASK recommend a five-year lease to align with grant and funding opportunities as proof of residence must be shown. It also allows ASK to coordinate and arrange future exhibits, shows, and programs.

To that end, it is recommended that administration be approved to enter into a five-year lease with 1893332 Ontario Incl. o/a ARTS SOCIETY OF KINGSVILLE (ASK). The terms will include, but not be limited to, the bullet points.

- Terms of the lease including a yearly review of services and policies, and the lease can be cancelled at the landlord's discretion.
- Financial and activity reporting
- Compliance with laws, by-laws, ordinances, regulations and directives of any public authority having jurisdiction affecting the premises.
- Training requirements for volunteers.
- Guidelines of use related to programming and inclusivity.
- Role of the landlord (garbage, cleaning, clarity of support).
- Indemnification of the landlord.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

- Strive to make the Town of Kingsville a more accessible community.
- Promote the betterment, self-image and attitude of the community.
- To promote a safe community.
- Improve recreational and cultural facilities and opportunities within the Town of Kingsville.
- Support growth of the business community.
- Effectively manage corporate resources and maximize performance in day-to-day operations.

LINK TO COUNCIL 2021-2022 PRIORITIES

- ☐ COVID-19 and the health and safety of the community
- ☐ Customer Service: Training, Technology, Staff, Review Standards/Level of service
- ☐ Housing: Affordability (lot sizes, developer incentives, second dwellings, density, etc.)
- ☐ Greenhouse: lights & dark sky, odours (site plan compliance, bylaws, other tools)
- ☒ Programming Increase: Youth and Seniors
- ☐ A development plan for Downtown Kingsville / Main Street
- ☐ Financial savings: Schools closings, Migration Hall
- ☒ Economic Development: strengthen tourism/hospitality
- ☒ COVID - economic recovery

- ☐ Communications: Strategy – Policy (social media), Website refresh and other tools, Public engagement
- ☐ Housing: Migrant Worker Housing – Inspections (Building/Fire), regulate, reduce, or increase
- ☐ Committees / Boards: Review and Report
- ☐ Policy Update: Procedural Bylaw
- ☐ Economic Development: diversify the economy, create local jobs, industrial, Cottam
- ☐ Infrastructure (non-Municipal): Union Water expansion & governance
- ☐ Infrastructure (Municipal): Asset Management Plan update, the infrastructure funding deficit
- ☐ No direct link to Council priorities

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The annual operating costs of the Carnegie are approximately \$25,000, which includes regularly scheduled maintenance.

In lieu of rent, ASK will provide twenty percent of all sales, commissions and classes to the Town. It is difficult to predict the revenue that will be generated, but the return on investment to create a Tourism destination, support the culture sector is critical/ immeasurable.

CONSULTATIONS

Arts Society of Kingsville
Kingsville Music Society
Manager of Municipal Facilities and Properties
BIA Coordinator
Tourism Coordinator

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