

CITY OF LONDON
CREATIVE CITIES TASK FORCE
NOTES FROM MEETING 07 - PUBLIC MEETING

Meeting held on January 22, 2005 at 10:08 a.m. – City Hall Council Chambers

PRESENT:

Task Force Members: Controller G. Hume (Chair), Councillors J. Bryant and C. Miller, J. Adams, C. Bryan, J. Glaser, P. Hoffer, C. Kehoe, G. Kerhoulas, J. Nicholson, B. Ohl, M. Sinclair, R. Wood, L. Zajac and J. C. Purser (secretary).

Working Group Members: A. Cohen (Chair), A. Halwa, D. Harvey, J. White and V. Stasiuk.

ALSO PRESENT: T. Johnson, R. Armistead and approximately 35 members of the public.

Welcome
and
introductions

1. Welcoming remarks from the task force Chair. Controller Hume thanked everyone for attending and thanked the organizations that set up displays and provided entertainment in the lobby. He explained the background of the project and introduced each task force member and working group member in attendance.

Discussion

2. The Chair initiated the discussion by asking the questions, "How do we inspire the community to be more creative?" and "What initiatives are there under way that we can build on?"

J. Adams spoke first about the InterNETwork London group consisting of approximately 100-200 young entrepreneurs. He indicated that the issues of arts and culture, transportation, trees, the environment and opportunities in London are all important to this group.

A member of the public expressed the need for more coop programs to be available for students and the need to encourage the private sector to get involved.

L. Zajac suggested that perhaps the City should develop a position dedicated to the development of coop programs. C. Bryan expressed that coop programs are wonderful opportunities for students. M. Sinclair mentioned that Fanshawe College has good technology coop programs. B. Wood indicated that UWO has some internship programs and suggested a need for mentoring to make coops more attractive to students.

A member of the public asked the questions "How do you make the task force ideas productive and tangible?" and "What can Council do to coordinate this effort?" and "How can the task force create these centres of excellence in the community?"

The Chair responded by saying that the task force will produce a series of action plans and will try to be as comprehensive and specific as possible.

A member of the public suggested that housing is an issue for young urban professionals. Councillor Miller mentioned that there are by-laws in place to promote housing in Old East and to bring up the building stock.

A member of the public suggested that London lacks an image, that it needs to develop an image to sell and promote itself and arts can be an integral part of that image. Leadership must come from City Council and they must be positive about what we do in this City. The wonderful convention centre needs to be promoted and pride needs to be encouraged as well as the children's choirs, brass ensembles and sports. The City needs a country and western festival. It can become the country and western centre of Canada. City Council should budget about \$4 million dollars a year for the arts in London.

A member of the public brought the discussion back to the issue of attracting creative people to the City by suggesting the need to focus on retention and support of arts and culture workers and the need for programs to help these people own their buildings. A recommendation was made for a program of affordable mortgages for arts and culture workers.

A member of the public said a problem is the lack of affordable housing and a lack of affordable studio space. Also mentioned was the issue that many artists do not have sufficient business skills and advertising or promotional skills and they could use assistance in those areas.

A member of the public suggested the need for networking groups for artists to get together and share ideas.

The issue of a lack of arts based coop programs in London was briefly discussed.

A member of the public mentioned a resource centre for artists in Toronto, a type of centralized bulletin board to check for classes available, theatre auditions, etc. The Chair responded by describing the new information portal being developed by the London Arts Council.

A member of the public talked about the disconnect between the film, television and arts communities in London and that there is no one contact source or film liaison commission here to arrange film shoots.

A member of the public asked how to go about generating funds for the artistic community and suggested that we look at what other cities are doing.

A member of the public talked about compartmentalization in London and that there are no linkages between groups. C. Kehoe asked how we can encourage artists, technologists and the business community to come together and start talking with each other. C. Bryan gave examples and suggested that artists need to take their own initiatives to go after their goals not wait for others or the City to lead the way.

B. Wood spoke about promotion of the arts and how London has limited outlets for promotion and no knowledgeable critics. He said that concrete recommendations are needed to put in place professional people and outlets for promotion.

J. Adams said the Toronto creative cities plan missed out on grass roots planning but he suggested that might not be the role of the task force. He said the task force should create mechanisms and remove barriers and that initiatives must be taken privately by individuals.

The Chair said that the task force report will be a starting point and that we need to take small steps in order to build and to grow.

G. Kerhoulas indicated that the City has very little assessment growth because few people move to London and therefore London is not growing financially. He said we need to attract creative people and creative organizations and that this issue is one of economic development and growth.

J. Glaser said that cultural workers need opportunities or they will go elsewhere and so the City needs to have a long term commitment to the London Arts Council and to work together with the LEDC on this economic development

issue.

A member of the public expressed an interest in seeing more promotion of our own local artists.

A member of the public mentioned the City of Chicago as a positive example of responsive tourism development. The people there have joint initiatives and work together to pitch in and promote their City.

A member of the public said that London should develop its own solutions and said that we have organized groups however they work in silos.

More specific solutions were offered up including:

- London needs a festivals group to celebrate our culture,
- London needs a multi-use arts centre,
- London needs a friendly pedestrian mall,
- Artist networking groups in London need to seek each other out,
- Should have a contest to answer the question "What does London mean to you?",
- Need to get out the message about a wonderful City,
- Need a concerted public relations campaign, both externally and internally,
- Need to put funding into public art.

Councillor Bryant expressed the need to direct Council to create by-laws to make London 'institutional friendly' and more beautiful with more trees and she said that we need to protect our heritage and our natural environment and gave examples such as Wortley Village and Richmond Row. Councillor Bryant also suggested that London businesses need to get involved with the job fairs at UWO and Fanshawe College.

The Chair closed by asking everyone to submit their ideas and solutions.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.