

JAN 22, 2005 PUBLIC MEETING NOTES - 65 PEOPLE ATTENDED

PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

- Through dialogue with the Task Force Members we have identified a lot of problems, now we are looking for solutions as to how we increase collaborations etc. We are reaching out to the community. The Task Force would have preferred to hold this public meeting in the downtown but all the venues were booked.

PURPOSE OF THE CREATIVE CITY TASK FORCE

- Its about the future of our City and the economic direction over the next 20 years
- Creative Cities is more than just arts and culture
- Need to link better to UWO and Fanshawe
- Comprehensive look at how we house artists downtown
- Looking at traffic patterns
- Challenge how to attract the 25 to 44 year olds
- Importance of public transportation
- Importance of technology to creative cities
- There may be a dis-connect between the perception of opportunities versus the real opportunities available in London
- Many young people leave and come back and are surprised at how negative we are within London – Need to Change How London Thinks
- Lack of job opportunities in London
- Need to create the Infrastructure to Allow the Creative City to Occur
- the Vision is that we want to be the hub of Southwestern Ontario
- It is about the city's economic future and changing how London thinks.

LAND USE NEEDS

Studio Space

- King street \$5-600 rent for studio space is too expensive and hard to find

Wonderland Gardens as an Artistic Space

- Wonderland Gardens could be turned into an arts centre

Performing Arts Centre Artistic Space

- We need a multi-use performing arts Center – similar to the Burlington arts centre

3 Energy Centres (Downtown, Richmond Row and Old East)

- A pedestrian mall in the downtown will make our centre a friendly place
- 3 centers need to create bylaws to make each of those energy centers unique.
- Need downtown more institutionally friendly. This has to be something that will direct Council for the future

Environment

- We need a Forest City with trees

Housing and Artistic Center

- Housing is an issue – where do we create an artistic area in our City?
- This is happening already as Old East London has the bylaw in place to do this with studio space in the front allowing artists to live in the back.
- Need programs for opportunities for creative people to own buildings. The Old East BIA is looking at a pilot housing project with retail space to offer affordable housing to our cultural workers who often make an average of \$14,000 a year below poverty level. If we can create conditions to retain and attract workers and live in our communities and they will create their own community. Many cultural workers are single parents. Creative people have a problem to afford to live – coop housing is good.
- Envisioned to concentrate in one area and to bring the building stock up.
- We have to pay attention to what we have and make it affordable and make it London based

Old East London Issue of safety

- All people need to feel safe in a cultural centre
- Everyone needs to take back the City to make it safe

NEED FOR HERITAGE

- There needs to be a commitment to Heritage to be the foundation of the creative city.

NEEDS OF ARTISTS

Retention of creative people to the City

- Artists work cannot be contrived need to create an atmosphere for arts to flourish. Need to grow to create a relationship that will last.

Artists need Business Skills – Education and Mentoring

- The Youth Envoy Program in Toronto sends young people to other countries for 6 months at a time
- September 11th Cultural Creative Conference in London to give skills of how to write the grants
- The Austin Music Foundation is an institute that provides training for promotion of artists
- The Forest City Gallery wants to have a professional artist group to share ideas and network.

Need an Artist in Residency

- Want people to say “I got my start in London”

Artist Needs for Communication

- Artists have needs for a centralized call board to inform the artists of what is available e.g., postings for auditions and theatre
- Artists need to gather as well as have this information available electronically through the Information hub

NEEDS OF YOUTH

- The university needs to increase its promotion of and pride in the arts programs
- Young people need to be entertained and there needs to be tax incentives to companies to sponsor entertainment

Need for Internships and mentoring

- JLC has had trouble with the process of getting internships from UWO
- The process of internships needs to be made more accessible on both sides
- Good for business to build alliances
- Most of employees come from coop programs so young people don't leave town
- We are not competitive with cities like Waterloo because we don't have coop programs.
- Recommendation to tie Cities grants to UWO and Fanshawe to what we would like to encourage
- Consider having a dedicated position at both Fanshawe and Western
- One member of the public obtained a coop student from Wheable High school.
- There is a medical internship in London but they are not staying
- Need tutoring or mentoring as coops are not what students look for when applying to UWO
- Other energy centres are Fanshawe and UWO
- Need to get London businesses involved in Job Fairs

STRUCTURAL SUPPORT NEEDS

London as a Regional Centre

- Need linkages between events and cities
- We need to use what we already have
- We have to build up the Region of London, Middlesex, St. Thomas, etc.,
- We need to Look at natural heritage of Middlesex County
- the Vision is that we want to be the hub of Southwestern Ontario
- Urban Rural Mix – celebrate

Need One Stop Shopping at City Hall

- Creative Cities has a web site
- Need one contact for City For Arts Advocacy
- Council doesn't know that we exist and we need a liaison at City Hall

Film and Television

- Biggest problem in City is the disconnect
- Starting to set up a film commission liaison. We need to bring productions from outside the City.
- There is no one source to contact at UWO.
- We need a film commission office at the City of London

Financial Issues

- Much more funding is required for the arts in London and for small to mid sized businesses to flourish
- The issue for the City is that the City has little assessment growth which is the main revenue generator for the City. The city of London is not growing financially and all these creative ideas cost money. If creative businesses and people don't come to London we are not going to grow.
- Need to build tourism industry to entertain groups that pay the bills
- Artists and Patrons go together – we need to promote our own arts first
- Arts groups need to take initiatives themselves and City could pick up some of the components to help like property taxes
- To encourage the business community, the City needs to provide the Old East BIA with sustainable funding
- Public Art Policy – need % of development costs in the Policy so that art becomes an integral part of who we are, not just our historical roots.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Re-branding of our Image

- Need to change our image
- Thing that London misses and lacks is an Image – we have none
- We do a poor job on promotion and leadership for promotion needs to come from City Council
- Pride is important to celebrate what London has – brass ensembles, sports at UWO
- Why don't Londoners attend their own events?
- London should be the country western capital as we have the best country western station in Canada. We need to build on that audience.
- The problem is that one newspaper drives the agenda
- Advertising can't be done in pdf file format as poster bills need to be created
- They love their city in Chicago they have a theme weekend every year – Need to work together to market
- Promotion cannot always be left to the individual artist - We need to promote London Artists
- The City of London needs more educated critics
- Need a public relations campaign within the City
- Could hold a contest – what does London mean to me? - reframe how we speak of London that's the message
- Need to add an Arts Tourism focus to Tourism London

London Successes

- JLC is 7th in the world premier entertainment facilities. it contributes \$6million to goods and services in London. The majority of employees live in London and are taxpayers in London. They are an economic force in London.
- Arts and cultural organizations are a tremendous part of London.
- Quality of professionalism in London is a success

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION NEEDS

- People who live here love this place! What sort of coordinating role can Council do? As a community how can we get together to keep the dialogue going?
- Who is going to coordinate this effort – need to create these centres of excellence in London
- Just by bringing people together is paying dividends
- The City needs to make a long term commitment (not just 5 year commitment) to the London Arts Council to look at them as an economic generator similar to LEDC. The London Arts Council could do the job for the City to be the focal point so it can do the job we are talking about.
- We are going to need a lot of support from the community for this initiative. Need to recognize that this is important for our economy. The report is a starting point for the future
- We need to connect outside our silos

NEED AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FRAMEWORK TO ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY

- Need to model our efforts on what will be good for London – we don't need to compare to other communities
- We need to distinguish actions which can be accomplished in the short term as well as actions to be accomplished in the long term