

CITY OF LONDON
CREATIVE CITIES TASK FORCE
NOTES FROM MEETING 02

Meeting held on October 21, 2004 at 4:06 p.m. in the Councillors Lounge.

PRESENT:

Task Force Members: Controller G. Hume (Chair), Councillor J. Bryant, J. Adams, C. Bryan, J. Glaser, C. Kehoe, G. Kerhoulas, J. Nicholson, B. Ohl, M. Sinclair, J. Winston, R. Wood, L. Zajac

Working Group Members: T. Adkin, R. Gloor, A. Halwa, D. Harvey, V. Stasiuk, J. White

ALSO PRESENT:

T. Johnson, R. Armistead, S. Keeping, J. Purser (clerk) and one member of the public

1. Disclosures There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

2. The 3 Questions A discussion was held about where to distribute the 3 questions listed on the CCTF Agenda 01. The names of some cultural groups and businesses were suggested. A. Halwa is to provide a list. M. Sinclair will distribute the questions to her peer group.

3. Internet Presence Controller Hume announced the Task Force now has an email address at creativecities@london.ca. He also announced that the CCTF will soon have a web site page and asked if R. Armistead, M. Sinclair, L. Zajac and J. Adams would work together on it.

4. Information Library Controller Hume announced that J. Purser is accumulating a resource library of written materials related to creative city initiatives. Anyone with materials to add or who would like to review the materials please contact J. Purser in the Clerk's Office at City Hall (661-5590).

5. Public Meeting Controller Hume announced that plans are underway to hold a creative cities public meeting sometime in mid-November. The Aeolian Hall was suggested as a good location to hold the public meeting.

6. Title Controller Hume requested the task force members, in the next two weeks, spend some time thinking about an appropriate title for the task force's initiative. He asked "is 'culture' the umbrella word for us?"

7. Accumulation of Ideas J. White began the ideas session by outlining the 'arts district' idea. He mentioned that London has the basis of one already with some good anchors

but that we should look forward and attempt to infill the area. He suggested a tax exemption idea.

J. Adams described his recent visit to Toronto to examine arts areas. His thought is that downtown London needs a greater residential component and should aim for a 0% vacancy rate. He recommends the empty stores and buildings be cleaned up and be made available for artists and arts related specialty retail.

J. Winston suggested an area in London's core be developed to specialize in a British theme with British goods, being unique and not in competition with the 'big box' stores. He also suggested the old library building be developed into a Canadian literary centre with a literary hall of fame.

Controller Hume outlined his idea for the use of the old central library building. He suggested that it become the new home of Creative Cities London, an incubator centre for artists, performers and writers. The main floor could be used for displays and the auditorium could be used for experimental theatre and performances. He also suggested the building could become a centre for multi-cultural groups to hold their offices and events.

J. Glaser talked about the idea of developing a London film commission to encourage film production companies to come to London. This may help the city's independent film community to develop. In general she said we need to generate ideas and to create an infrastructure to keep people in the city. J. Glaser suggested the city needs an inventory of available film crews for promotion to film companies.

C. Bryan talked about the need for sustainable funding, that we should give the artists the money and then get out of the way. He suggested that for profit companies can fund not for profit companies. He suggested a lottery for the arts idea. He mentioned that people generally do not place a high enough value on arts and culture and that there is a need for education in this area. He recommended arts education programs in elementary schools.

B. Wood suggested that London become a mecca for commercial music in general with A1 top quality performances. He mentioned this will attract song writing and royalties and that the business expertise is already here in London. He suggested the recording industry is in a major state of flux which will change greatly in the next 10 years and that we need support in this area.

L. Zajac suggested the need to create a synergy among young people in the City perhaps by developing a new organization for them. Young graduates may find the TechAlliance organization intimidating. A community is needed here for them such as Toronto's Young Professionals of Canada for business graduates. Our youth want acceptance, a sense of belonging, to develop networks, exposure to new philosophies, new technologies and need exposure to arts and culture in London. She indicated that all London has to offer is not readily visible to students.

B. Ohi suggested a youth mentoring program is needed, a type of arts and culture buddy system.

J. White remarked that for some immigrant and ethnic groups arts and culture plays a larger role in their lives and after coming to London they wonder where it is (the arts & culture).

Controller Hume asked if the City needs an entrepreneurial incubator centre and if so, should the Ivey School of Business be approached on this? He indicated that many graduates are looking for jobs and they are not necessarily risk takers.

J. Nicholson suggested that London needs rebranding and he pointed out that London's vision statement makes no reference to arts and culture.

C. Bryan recommended that London have more visibility at London gateways such as the airport, train station, etc.

A. Halwa described the Arts Council's arts and entertainment internet portal to be ready in November and she expressed the City's need of an arts inventory.

J. Nicholson suggested using the planning and development approvals process to bargain some needed infrastructure.

J. Adams likes the Forest City logo because it is distinct and has an environmental link. But he said we are in danger of losing this connection especially along the Wellington Road gateway. He also indicated the London highway signage was too small.

C. Kehoe recommended that parking lots be placed behind the stores to give a better sense of community (mentioned the Indianapolis example). She asked what we are doing to enhance the image of the Forest City. It was also mentioned that more shrubs and trees are needed to enhance the Forest City

name.

J. Winston indicated that in Calgary developers are required to install sculptures in public places. Controller Hume mentioned as an example of public art the art collection on display at London Police headquarters. C. Bryan said that more fountains would be good.

J. Nicholson suggested a 'culture pass' especially for youth and that the City could benefit from having a culture department to nurture and celebrate arts and culture. He said that career mentoring for youth is important as is arts funding such as the Community Arts Investment Program. Controller Hume asked can we target incoming immigrants and investors for mentoring?

J. Nicholson suggested the city needs something to put us on the map such as a cluster of buildings with a single use.

R. Gloor spoke about the performing arts centre idea and what it could mean to London. He suggested that financing need not only come from the municipality and indicated that other models do exist.

J. Winston suggested a performing arts centre can act as a catalyst for all that needs to be done, a signature piece. He gave as an example the Shriners Hospital would not have come about without the airport development.

J. Adams suggested a performing arts centre may not be of any benefit and may hurt the cultural community. He mentioned that a good place for a centre would be behind the old Century and Capitol Theatres on Dundas Street. He recommended keeping the façade and building the centre behind.

Controller Hume's suggestion is to recommend to Council that a performing arts centre be constructed and be open by 2015. This would give enough time to do all the planning, the land assembly and construction while getting past the 2009 budget constraints.

J. Glaser recommended we should develop some parameters for a performing arts venue versus a hall for the orchestra and that we must include the grass roots culture.

Councillor Bryant described the City of Christchurch New Zealand, how it used to look like London but now it is much improved. Some ideas submitted by Councillor Bryant include the need to help our newcomers and the need to emphasize our strengths. She mentioned London's creative energy centres, the

