

Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Community Human Services
Arts and Culture Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Heather Slater, Manager of Arts and Culture
Date: January 4, 2021
Subject: Request for transfer from Reserves (Cultural Action Teams and Mapping) for CK Arts and Culture Network

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The residual amount of \$17,561 be transferred from the Cultural Action Teams and Mapping reserve to the Arts and Culture Operations Account, as per the 2014 Cultural Plan Implementation Project, as seed funding for CK Arts and Culture Network.

Background

In 2008, Council approved the Municipality's first-ever Cultural Master Plan: *Culture, Economy, Community: A Cultural Plan for Chatham-Kent (2007)*. This plan addressed the need for a wide variety of arts, culture, and creative opportunities for residents of Chatham-Kent, and highlighted the ways in which cultural organizations and facilities contribute to economic stability and job creation.

The *Cultural Plan Implementation Project (2014)*, approved by Council in December 2014, outlined the specific means of achieving the goals of the Cultural Master Plan. The Implementation Project comprises 24 individual items, the majority of which have been completed in the ensuing years, or are in the process of completion in either their original or modified forms.

There were two overarching goals of the Cultural Master Plan:

1. To examine municipal arts and culture venues and their operations to ensure that capacity is in place for the future growth of arts and culture in Chatham-Kent
2. To assist in the establishment of a community-run arts network to support cultural collaboration between the Municipality and its business and community partners

The first goal has been the priority of the Implementation Project thus far, with a focus on balancing day-to-day fiscal management with future sustainability, and positioning municipal arts and culture venues and their programming for continued growth. This work culminated in a full Cultural Service Review in 2018, and led to a merging of the operations of the Capitol Theatre and the Cultural Centre into a new Arts and Culture section in April 2019. The Arts and Culture section is guided by a desire to maximize synergies between the Municipal venues, while strengthening ties to community artists and arts organizations, in order to enrich the cultural landscape as a whole.

The second goal of the Implementation Project was to move from Create CK, a volunteer committee made up of regional representatives and municipal staff who assisted in the creation of the Cultural Plan, to the formalization of “an incorporated, not-for-profit arms-length committee with standard by-laws, policies, format, structure and roles” – essentially, a community arts council for Chatham-Kent. In its early years, Create CK had received funding from Ontario Trillium Foundation, Community Futures CK, as well as Municipal Council, to form Cultural Action Teams throughout the Municipality and hold events in each community. Residual funds from these initiatives were placed in a Cultural Action Teams and Mapping reserve to support the new community arts council once the first goal of the Implementation Project had been achieved.

As per the action items in the Implementation Project, the community contingent of Create CK formed a transition committee that soon became the steering committee for the Kent Cultural Network. This steering committee consulted community arts councils throughout Ontario to seek guidance on a suitable model for Chatham-Kent, and met regularly to work toward incorporation. Discussions continued intermittently between 2016 and 2018, and resumed on a regular basis in June 2020, under a new name: CK Arts and Culture Network.

Fig. 1: Timeline of Transition from Create CK to CK Arts and Culture Network



Soon to be incorporated as a not-for-profit, and in the process of recruiting members, the CK Arts and Culture Network is a volunteer-based, membership-driven charitable organization with a mandate to: advocate for arts and culture; help support cultural programming and activities throughout Chatham-Kent; and increase community connection to and engagement in the arts. The CK Arts and Culture Network has the following goals:

- Increase opportunities for the creative community to learn, work, and thrive in Chatham-Kent;
- Grow connections and collaboration in the arts and between community sectors;
- Advocate for and support economic investment in the arts;
- Increase the engagement of residents and visitors with Chatham-Kent's artists and arts programming; and
- Promote understanding and respect for the diversity of creative practice.

Comments

Supporting the establishment of the CK Arts and Culture Network will complete the action items in the Cultural Master Plan, and set the groundwork for a new Arts and Culture plan in 2021-2022.

Since 2007, when the original Cultural Master Plan was created, much has changed in the arts and culture sector, not just in Chatham-Kent but provincially and nationally as well. A movement toward a more seamless integration of community and professional arts practices is seen as key to a healthy, creative economy. Funding bodies have evolved their assessment models to reflect this shift, no longer evaluating organizations primarily by artistic discipline, but on engagement goals and results as well, and the extent to which they remain integral to their communities. The close collaboration between community and municipal arts organizations is more important today than ever – particularly in the wake of COVID-19, when the future of arts and culture traditions and institutions lies in peril, and yet their value in people's lives has never been more apparent.

A 2011 study commissioned by the Ontario Arts Council, entitled *Fostering Arts at a Local Level*, examined the increasingly significant role of Community Arts Councils. The study showed that Community Arts Councils are invaluable in helping to facilitate intersections between community and professional arts, and can be a key driver in revitalizing the cultural landscape and building a thriving cultural economy. Community Arts Councils can also help municipal arts and culture venues better reflect their unique communities in the works they present, whether onstage, in exhibit, or online.

Chatham-Kent remains one of the few communities in Ontario without a Community Arts Council. While the CK Arts and Culture Network will operate independently from the Municipality, it offers the Municipality the benefit of an engaged group of arts and culture stakeholders through which valuable input can be garnered. Following the model

of many successful Community Arts Councils throughout Ontario, the Municipal Manager of Arts and Culture will act as an ex-officio, non-voting member; this will ensure open lines of communication between the Municipality and the community on arts and culture priorities, directions and projects, and will provide the opportunity to build new creative partnerships and collaborations. The CK Arts and Culture Network will increase engagement around arts and culture in Chatham-Kent, including many of the Municipal initiatives that are central to the cultural future, from legacy projects and public art, to community arts initiatives and signature arts events.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendation in this report supports the following areas of strategic focus

Economic Prosperity:

Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy

A Healthy and Safe Community:

Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth

People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

Environmental Sustainability:

Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendation in this report supports the following critical success factors:

Financial Sustainability:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable

Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership

Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors

Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

Financial Services has confirmed the amount in the Culture Action Teams and Mapping Reserve.

Members of the original Create CK transition committee, as well as community arts and culture stakeholders involved in the formation of the CK Arts and Culture Network, were consulted regarding the content of this report.

Financial Implications

This one-time dispersal will clear the Cultural Action Teams and Mapping Reserve.

Reserve as of December 2020	\$17,561
Transfer from Reserve to Arts and Culture Operations Account	\$-17,561
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Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

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Attachment: None

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James Snyder, Create CK, Kent Cultural Network, CKACN Transition Committee
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