

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Community Human Services

Community Attraction and Leisure Services – Arts and Culture

Information Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Heather Slater
Manager, Arts and Culture

Date: September 14, 2020

Subject: Arts and Culture Reopening

This report is for the information of Council.

Background

On March 13, 2020, the Arts and Culture section of Community Attraction and Leisure Services ceased programming in all of its venues and closed them to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thames Art Gallery, Chatham-Kent Museum, Capitol Theatre and Kiwanis Theatre are reopening throughout September and October 2020. Milner Heritage House, Ridge House Museum and ARTspace remain closed until further notice.

Comments

On September 16, 2020, the Thames Art Gallery reopened with a new exhibition entitled “Messagers’ Forum”, originally planned for spring/summer 2020. Entry is walk-in, with each guest admitted by an Operational Safety Officer, who also collects contact-tracing information. Maximum number of guests in the gallery at any one time is 30 people. Directional signage is in place and there are no interactive elements in the exhibition. On September 18 and 19, the featured artist (Patrick Mahon) will present a talk and tour for a maximum of 20 physically distanced guests who register in advance. Touch points in the gallery (specifically mezzanine and stairway railing) will be cleaned regularly by the Gallery Attendant. Later in September, some gallery programming, including pottery classes (maximum eight registrants) will resume as well.

On September 30, 2020, CK Museum will open with an exhibit that closed early due to COVID entitled “Carnivals, Festivals and Fairs”. The original exhibit featured many interactive elements, which have now been modified to ensure that all items can be cleaned and disinfected between visits. Entry is by appointment for social-bubbles of up to 10 people at a time. Contact-tracing information will be collected at time of

registration. The Museum Attendant will accompany guests through their visit, and will be noting touch points for cleaning before the next visitors arrive.

Visits will be subject to current limitations, which restrict attendance to 50 persons in the entire venue; attendance in the gallery will be limited according to the number of visitors in the museum (and vice versa), so as not to surpass the 50-visitor limit in the Cultural Centre as a whole. (At the time of this writing, cultural centres have not been granted the same exemption as movie theatres and recreation centres, which are permitted to have 50 visitors in each of several rooms concurrently).

Under Stage 3 restrictions, performing arts centres are permitted a maximum of 50 audience members at a time, and a plexiglass or similar impermeable barrier must be placed between the stage and audience if singing or the playing of wind/brass instruments is taking place. Internal presentations of the Capitol and Kiwanis Theatres that were planned for the 2020-2021 Performance Season have been postponed to the 2021-2022 Season. For rentals of the theatre by external presenters/promoters, each event is being discussed individually to determine whether it is feasible to proceed under the current COVID restrictions. Shows in both theatres up until November 6 have been cancelled or postponed until 2021. Weekly movies at the Capitol Theatre are scheduled to resume in November 2020, and plans are underway for a live-stream series from the Capitol stage.

Event procedures at the theatres will be adjusted to address COVID-19 restrictions including timed entry and the omission of intermissions to prevent crowding in the lobby; new online seating plans that will automatically block seats between each group attending to ensure physical distancing; e-ticket scanners for touchless ticketing; flexible ticket refund policy to discourage patrons from attending if they are feeling unwell; modification of bar and concession services according to public health guidelines; and debit/credit functionality at concession stands to encourage cashless sales.

Consultation

CK Occupational Health and Safety and the CK Public Health Unit have conducted audits of the Culture Centre and are satisfied with the re-opening plan and modifications (touch points, plexiglass, traffic flow, signage, etc.). An audit of the Capitol Theatre will take place in the coming weeks. Theatre reopening plans are being shaped in conjunction with Ontario Presents, the Canadian Live Music Association, and CAPACOA (Canadian Association for the Performing Arts) to ensure best practices are followed across the Canadian performing arts industry as a whole.

Financial Implications

All physical distancing materials will be covered by the Arts and Culture budget.

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Attachments: None

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