

For the public agenda regarding a film office for London:

August 18, 2020

To London City Council, On behalf of the Forest City Film Festival.

I want to express our full support of the Film Industry Motion brought before you by Councilor van Holst to create a Film Office in London with the \$300k annual budget proposed.

The Film Festival has worked for five years to assist filmmakers of this region through providing them great networking opportunities, educational experiences and the chance to screen their films to a live audience. All of the work that we do helps to build capacity of the regional filmmaker and helps to open us up to the industry. Over the past four years some very important industry people have become more aware of the potential of London. We are in a very nice position to capitalize on this awareness that has slowly started to be built by the Film Festival, and a Film Office is crucial to move that awareness to another level and turn it into a valuable industry for London.

One of the most important parts of bringing film, TV and other content production here to this city is to stop the brain drain that occurs when students graduate from the film programs at Western and Fanshawe and need to leave to find work. Having a Film Commission Office in this city would help to retain these graduates as many of them would prefer to stay then move to the expensive big city.

The timing is crucial and I can't stress enough the opportunity that COVID has opened up for this region to get a slice of the \$2Billion Ontario film industry. We may never see this opportunity again! If we delay we will miss the time when the industry is more open to expanding outside of Toronto than it has ever been. The soil is rich for sowing the seeds!

I urge each of you to pass this motion and take a crucial step to building this industry here in London. The business will not come here without the Film Office and this is a very important and lucrative sector to attract to our city.

Please pass the Film Industry Motion by Councilor van Holst.

Sincerely, Dorothy Downs Executive Director Forest City Film Festival