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<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON OCTOBER 6, 2020</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>SCOTT STAFFORD MANAGING DIRECTOR, PARKS AND RECREATION</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>RESPONSE TO VISUAL ARTIST K. O'NEILL CONCERNING ARTS AND CULTURE POLICIES AND FUNDING</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Parks and Recreation, the following report, written in response to the delegation letter of request from Visual Artist K. O'Neill, attached as Appendix "A", **BE RECEIVED** for information.

<b>PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER</b>
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- Public Art and Monument Policy, November, 2017
- Culture Plan Update, February, 2019
- Grand Theatre Grant Agreement 2019 – 2023, March, 2019
- London Arts Council Multi-Year Agreement 2019 – 2023, March, 2019

<b>BACKGROUND</b>
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City Council at its meeting held on January 28, 2020 resolved:

*“That the information provided in the delegation from K. O’Neill, with respect to policies and funding related to arts and culture in the City of London, **BE REFERRED** to the Civic Administration for review and a report back at a future meeting of the Community and Protective Services Committee; it being noted that the above-noted delegation was received.”*

The purpose of this report is to report back about the concerns provided in the delegation from K. O'Neill, with respect to policies and funding related to arts and culture in the City of London. The information provided in the delegation is attached as Appendix "A". Culture, Special Events and Sport Services of Parks and Recreation, other City of London service areas, and the London Arts Council have consulted with Ms. O'Neill and will continue this dialogue to discuss her concerns moving forward.

London has a unique decentralized community partner approach to the delivery of cultural services connected by the City of London's Culture Office. The Culture Office works with community partners and City service areas to implement London's Cultural Prosperity Plan. On February 20, 2019 the Culture Office provided London's Cultural Prosperity Plan Update Report entitled "Our City, Our Culture" to the Community and Protective Services Committee (CPSC). It was intended to be an opportunity to provide Council with an update on the progress of the implementation of London's Cultural Prosperity Plan since it was adopted in March 2013, and to celebrate its successes.



London’s Cultural Prosperity Plan will continue to be in place until 2024 and will be enhanced by looking at key areas of focus to assist the culture sector to be successful in London.

The Culture Office has worked to include culture strategies and performance measures in other municipal plans and service area collaborations such as: through City Council’s 2019-2023 Strategic Plan; the London Plan; and, the Municipal Benchmarking Network of Canada (MBNC).

Culture is funded through the City’s multi-year budget and accountable through the City’s annual financial update process. The format of the City’s budget is standardized for all service areas.

The 2020 Arts, Culture and Heritage Budget includes the following budget transfers:

Transfer	Description
\$750,000	Community Arts Investment Program administered by London Arts Council (LAC) <a href="http://www.londonarts.ca">www.londonarts.ca</a>
\$500,000	The Grand Theatre 2019- 2023 Annual Operational Grant
\$ 76,300	Community Heritage Investment Program administered by London Heritage Council (LHC) <a href="http://www.londonheritage.ca">www.londonheritage.ca</a>
\$132,000	City of London Public Art Program

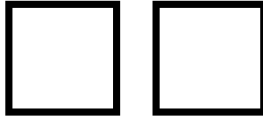
It also includes operating funds for public art maintenance and purchased cultural services provided by the London Arts Council and the London Heritage Council as outlined in their Multi-Year 2019 – 2023 Agreements, approved by Council in the spring of 2019. These Agreements specify that these not-for-profit organizations are responsible for sector education and engagement, and the creation of activities and programs that meet the needs of their sectors. The benefits of these Purchase of Service Agreements to the City of London are that these community organizations are able to leverage additional funding and sponsorship for cultural programming from other funders that the City would not otherwise be able to do itself.

**Community Arts Investment Program**

The London Arts Council (LAC) administers the Community Arts Investment Program (CAIP) on behalf of the City of London. The CAIP application streams are adjudicated through knowledgeable community arts discipline juries and investments are made in a number of areas of the arts, including visual arts. Having this arms-length adjudication from the City is beneficial to ensure consistent fair decisions are made by members of the arts sector. More information is available on the LAC website (<https://www.londonarts.ca/investments>) about the program and the investments that have been made in the arts. For the 2020 CAIP investment year, two information sessions for artists and artist collectives were held in January. These sessions provided information about the program and other LAC artist opportunities as well as, the opportunity to network with other artists. Non-profit organizations such as the London Association of Visual Artists (LAVA) that are not incorporated would be eligible to apply to the Artist Collective Stream of CAIP and these on-line applications are shorter than the Organization Stream applications for incorporated registered not-for-profit organizations.

**City of London Public Art and Monuments Policy and Program**

The Culture Office administers the City of London Public Art and Monuments Program, which is an ongoing operational program in existence since 2007 under the authority of the Council Approved Public Art and Monuments Policy. London Arts Council administers the artist selection process for the commissioning of public art and



monuments under this program. The primary purpose of the Public Art and Monuments Policy that guides the Public Art and Monuments Program, is to provide a mechanism through which the City of London maintains, and acquires public art and monuments for municipally owned public space through its purchase, commission or donation.

**The City of London Neighbourhood Decision-Making**

Neighbourhood Decision-Making (NDM) is a program that Council has committed \$250,000 to annually. The purpose of this program is to engage, empower, and connect residents by bringing neighbours together around community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen their neighbourhoods. Specified spending amounts for visual arts would not be possible as part of this program as Londoners cast votes to decide what neighbourhood enhancement projects will be funded.

**Marketing and Promotion of Arts Events and Organizations**

Currently arts events are promoted through the Tourism London Website [www.tourismlondon.ca](http://www.tourismlondon.ca) as Tourism London has the marketing mandate and is able to provide a centralized website to accommodate the capacity for cultural information. Tourism London also provides an area for free event submissions, which are then promoted on their event calendar. The London Arts Council has an Artist Organization Directory on their website which features arts organizations, collectives and individual artists.

**Space for Non-Profit Groups to Meet and Exhibit**

In regards to the inquiry from K. O'Neill about obtaining City of London meeting space at no charge for their visual arts collective to be able to grow, we would encourage this non-profit group to complete the City's "Request to Waive Fees to Recreation Centres Policy" and application for use of community centre and recreation facility space on the City's website at: <http://www.london.ca/residents/Recreation/Community-Centres/Pages/Request-to-Waive-Fees-to-Recreation-Centres.aspx> .

There are also low/no cost options for the London Association for Visual Arts to consider using to meet/exhibit at City owned facilities such as Elsie Perrin Williams Estate and London Public Library Branches.

The incorporation of visual artists exhibiting at no charge as part of a festival or neighbourhood event is the decision of the hosting event organization who is renting public or private space, considering the revenues generated by vendor fees and their fairness policies of charging one group and not another. The opportunity for London Association of Visual Artists and other visual arts organizations to exhibit their artworks on Dundas Place could be further explored with Dundas Place partners.

**CONCLUSION**

The Culture Office, its key partners such as the London Arts Council, and cultural community continue to build upon achievements and initiatives currently underway to strengthen the capacity of the culture sector for London.

It is recognized that the London Association for Visual Artists, as an artist collective, is making a vital contribution through its activities and participation in local programs and events and we will continue to meet with them and find ways to work together.

<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>REVIEWED AND SUBMITTED BY:</b>
<b>ROBIN ARMISTEAD MANAGER, CULTURE PARKS AND RECREATION</b>	<b>JON-PAUL MCGONIGLE DIVISION MANAGER, CULTURE, SPECIAL EVENTS AND SPORT SERVICES PARKS AND RECREATION</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>	
<b>SCOTT STAFFORD MANAGING DIRECTOR, PARKS AND RECREATION</b>	

Attachment

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**Appendix “A”**

**The Information Provided In the Delegation *from K. O’Neill***

DATE: Nov. 20, 2019

TO: Community and Protective Services Committee, City of London

RE: Improvements for Arts & Culture

Request for Delegation Status

I request a hearing with the *Community and Protective Services Committee* regarding policies and funding which impact Arts & Culture.

As a very budget-conscious citizen, all items presented for discussion are aimed at no-cost changes. I will also note that the Arts are no minor economic concern – *please see the excerpts at the end of this document* – but understand that throwing more money at ineffective programs will not produce desired effects. Recent research data is needed to evaluate changes that could yield important improvements with funds we currently spend.

As a professionally trained Visual Artist and certified teacher, most of the information I present will be aimed at the Visual Arts scene but could favourably impact the literary and theatre communities as well, who also deserve attention.

In Dec of 2018 I started an arts group called *London Association of Visual Artists* (LAVA) because the 3 existing painting groups all had 4-year waiting lists; I found out they have “no space for larger groups to meet.” Meanwhile taxpayer funded rooms sit idle, heated for no one’s benefit while we are left out in the cold. We have over 40 members and have to meet in coffee shops. Our group refuses to pay a fee just to meet, we are non-profit.

Having noted the sudden disappearance of the Nuit Blanche Festival in 2018 (with no prior warning despite it being advertised all the way to Toronto) and the lackluster Culture Days which has also now been cancelled, I fail to see adequate progress regarding the *London Cultural Prosperity Plan*. The Sunfest and Home County festivals may pay performers – but force Visual Artists to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars to exhibit. Treated as vendors, artists often LOSE money as we do not have cheap goods to mark up for high profits.

While the Arts Council mandate stated they provide “Assistance for artists, artist collectives, and arts organizations with professional development and training, networking and mentorship opportunities, and community connection and accessibility”, this seems incorrect. (This and other sections of the mandate have recently disappeared. The mandate has shrunk considerably- has the funding?). They appear out of touch with the people they purport to represent, and do not survey them nor even provide a basic newsletter. Standard *Calls to Artists* are not adequately advertised, and the roster of artists is chosen partly on a project basis. This can unfairly exclude trained professionals, and appears to favour “friends”.

I note many smaller organizations have no access to funding other than an extremely long grants form that ties groups to the stated political aims of the Arts Council, which does not allow groups to decide what they find important.

Enforced agendas about mental health and radical social justice do not foster freedom of artistic expression. Writers and theatre people told me they are unwilling to “jump through hoops” to appease the agendas of the Arts Council. We are Artists, not Social Workers; let us do our professions as we were trained to.

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The Neighborhood Decision Making model is an option but there is no guaranteed arts funding there either, so well connected power organizations can sometimes override arts altogether, especially as the city's employees are more aware of the program than the general public.

I would like to outline some suggestions to the Committee for improvements regarding:

1. improved budget formats and oversight of arts spending to make it more transparent & accountable.
2. shorted forms for minor grants: \$500 grants should not need the same form as a \$10,000 one
3. specified spending amounts for Arts & Culture from Neighbourhood Decision making (or other body)
4. better inclusion of the arts community through surveys & funding for long-lived groups
5. better communication with the arts community though an improved newsletter
6. spaces for arts groups to meet without charge to allow them to grow
7. groups and individual artists in London to be featured on one website along with upcoming arts events
8. better networking so arts groups know about each other – we like to support and cross-promote arts
9. inclusion of Visual Artists in more festivals, and Dundas Place events, on a commission basis
10. better advertisement of all arts groups and productions (Tourism London site only - not appropriate for us)

I have spent a great deal of time in the last 2 years going over budgets, policies, and considering improvements. While some meetings with the Manager of Culture have been beneficial and resulted in changes (such as removing the small fee for artists to exhibit art in the libraries) the meeting with the Arts Council resulted in zero progress, not even an agreement to restore the newsletter or reach out to London's long-lived arts organizations for any opinions. It is time to stop exploiting artists, writers, and performers for profit, where buildings and bureaucracies get paid but we do not; the current formula leads to a reduction in the number and quality of artists of all genres, while the respectful treatment of us yields more vibrant communities that people want to move to.

To ignore the vital energy that well-connected, growing arts groups can bring to the various communities in London is to neglect not only this creative energy, but the improved activity and spending that help to make a healthy economy – one that gets people out of their homes more, to participate in local programs and events.

I will offer as proof the activities LAVA has organized in ONE year:

- a well-attended opening show (120 people)
- an ARTWALK display of paintings on Richmond Row with 20+ businesses participating
- a community picnic and art show + composter demonstration (funded by Neighbourhood London)
- an elegant night out with local musicians
- an art display at the Woodfield Fair
- supporting FRINGE shows as a group
- a library exhibit & kick-off brunch

This city should not ignore its own plans. There has not been a five-year review as suggested by the *London Cultural Prosperity Plan*. There is not enough input from the community on the

Agenda Item # Page #

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effectiveness of the current spending for arts, and it is time to do so. A group of well-connected individuals whose jobs are at stake are not the proper group to ask how well this is being done.

Sincerely,

Kathryn O'Neill, B. Ed, Major in Fine Arts  
359 Flanders Row, London