



City of
Peterborough

To: **Members of the Arts, Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee**

From: **Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services**

Meeting Date: **January 15, 2015**

Subject: **Report ACHAC15-001
Public Art Projects**

Purpose

A report to receive a presentation on past City Public Art initiatives, mural projects in other communities like Chemainus, British Columbia, and to seek direction on several potential Public Art projects.

Recommendations

That the Arts, Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee (ACHAC) approve the recommendations outlined in Report ACHAC15-001 dated January 15, 2015 of the Director of Community Services as follows:

- a) That the presentation on past City Public Art initiatives and Public Art murals, particularly in Chemainus, British Columbia, be received as information;
- b) That the proposed Downtown Business Improvement Area Public Art Mural Project be approved as a 2015 priority project and that ACHAC be apprised of the proposed Focus Group discussions early in the new year;
- c) That a detailed proposal for the potential City Hall Mural Project as a 2015 project be prepared for ACHAC's consideration early in the new year;
- d) That the inquiry relating to Hunter Street Bridge Graffiti be explored as a potential Public Art project in 2016;

- e) That in accordance with the Municipal Cultural Plan, the Arts Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee approve the inclusion of a Public Art project in 2016 as a component of the Library Renewal Project;
- f) That a Public Art Steering Committee be established as a subcommittee of the Arts Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee in accordance with the City's Public Art Policy, and that a member of ACHAC be appointed as Chair.

Budget and Financial Implications

There is currently a balance of \$148,861 in the Public Art capital budget available for projects.

Background

With the notable exception of the bus wrap Public Art project back in 2013, there has been little progress on Public Art projects as a result of staff turnover and conflicting priorities. A commitment has been made with a veterans group to have a Public Art project recognizing the role of peace keepers as part of the proposed redevelopment of the Louis Street parking lot. This project, however, has been deferred to coincide with the timeline for the overall park development. There have also been preliminary discussions with the Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA) staff regarding a potential mural project as outlined below. Some funds have been expended to conserve some of the earlier Public Art installations.

Chemainus Murals

The small town of Chemainus, British Columbia, has gained an international reputation for its on-going mural and sculpture public art projects. Originally dependent on the forest industry, the community was suffering considerable decline by the late 1970's. With provincial funding support in the early 1980's, the community decided to redefine itself with a commitment to public art.

The success of the town's first mural project in 1982 has spurred the installation of 44 murals and 11 sculptures strategically located throughout the community. Chemainus now attracts over 100,000 visitors a year from around the world. They come for the murals, professional live theatre, music festivals, colourful architecture, unique shops, and great cuisine. The town is an inspiration for the power of public art! The Director of Community Services had an opportunity to visit Chemainus this past summer and has prepared a brief power point presentation on the murals.

DBIA Mural Project

Earlier this year division staff began meeting with representatives from the Downtown Business Improvement area (DBIA) to explore the feasibility of a mural project at a downtown location. The DBIA has committed \$1,000 towards the project and would be responsible for securing an appropriate site. It is proposed that the City, through division staff and a project steering committee, would provide the balance of the funding required, and have a juried process for a County-wide competition (projected at \$20,000).

Some Committee members may remember the ill-fated “Teaching Rocks” mural that once adorned the west exterior of the Lillico legal building at the southwest corner of George and Hunter. This inspirational mural had been painted directly on the exterior stucco of the building resulting in significant damage to the interior plaster on the adjacent walls over time. This led to significant repairs inside and the loss of the mural outside. To avoid this challenge on future projects, staff and the DBIA have been discussing alternatives like installing murals on raised panels or printing the selected image on vinyl.

To significantly advance this project, staff and the DBIA have agreed to host a small focus group over the next several weeks. Invitees will include Arts Culture & Heritage Division Staff / Committee members, DBIA reps, and local professional artists with mural project experience, especially in other communities. Based on the information obtained, parameters, process, and budget will be developed so that the project can be completed in 2015. It is hoped that this could lead to a more comprehensive long term commitment.

City Hall Mural Project

The recent renovations to the Council Chambers, the Doris Room, and the connecting hallway have left a large vacant canvas of wall section at the top of the stairs outside the Council Chambers. It was initially hoped that the portraits of the various Mayors, which had previously covered the wall, would be digitized and scrolled on the television monitor now installed in the centre of the area. It was originally intended that the Fleming Museum Management and Curatorship students would research, design, and install something comparable to their tribute to the local military in the foyer but they are unable to do so next semester.

Staff has proposed this as a potential site for an interior wall mural. Administration is receptive and would welcome a proposal to respond to. Staff would appreciate input from the Arts Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee. Staff would also propose that this opportunity be discussed at the focus group meeting identified above.

Hunter Street Bridge Graffiti Project

Following the reconstruction of the Hunter Street Bridge and recent improvements to James Stevenson Park, there has been a growing problem with graffiti on some of the lower bridge arches within the park. The Director of Utility Services has asked if the Division would consider organizing a graffiti Public Art project in this area to deter unauthorized graffiti. Experience with such projects in other jurisdictions has shown that organized graffiti projects deter unwanted painting. Staff would like some direction from the Arts Culture & Heritage Advisory Committee on how to respond to this inquiry.

Library Expansion Project

As an expansion / refresh project within the Community Services Department, the Library plans include a Public Art installation. The architect team has been asked to seek suggestions for a Public Art installation in the expanded facility as part of the community consultation scheduled for December 9, 2014. Since the Library project is tentatively scheduled for construction in 2016, pending budget approvals, this should be a priority Public Art project in 2016.

Public Art Advisory Committee

The City established a Public Art Policy as a result of Report CSACH09-007, dated April 6, 2009. The policy recommended the establishment of a Public Art Advisory Committee as a subcommittee of ACHAC. ACHAC should appoint a Chair from among its members and direct them to: nominate a committee for ACHAC approval; to confirm and/or develop committee terms of reference, and to use the committee to advance and support the projects listed above.

Summary

The City's Public Art program has been in hiatus for several years. With the activation of the Public Art Advisory Committee and the advancement of several potential mural projects, it is hoped that the program can begin to realize its potential.

Submitted by,

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