

Good morning,

I am emailing the council and specifically city representatives in support and consideration of a Community Artspace in the Drill Hall which will be discussed in a meeting on June 4th.

I believe that the arts have been essential to defining our city and bringing the community together - this will always be one of the core things that I love about Guelph and makes it feel like home for our family. While there are many wonderful spaces for the arts in Guelph, as a local artist I do notice some gaps present in what is currently available to local artists.

- Accessibility: many spaces can be challenging to access with either no or limited elevator/accessibility options OR due to financial barriers for individuals who can not afford expensive rental rates.
- While our recreational services offer many amazing spaces to rent within community centres these spaces are not specifically arts focused (for example do not offer long term storage or space for art supplies/set ups, performances or long term community events/ exhibition.)
- There has been a limited selection of arts related courses offered through the city's recreational program. There are many dedicated spaces for sports (Guelph sports dome/ recreational gym, rinks, skating) there is no large space for our community to gather in celebration of the arts. I wonder if we had this space would we allow art to more readily flourish in the community.
- It would be amazing to have a space for local performers, theatre as well as visual arts. While it is amazing we have access to venues like the River Run Centre it would be amazing to have a more affordable option to local community groups who often rely on smaller local venues/ quick fixes in order to pursue the arts.
- Across Canada and in our Guelph community we're seeing a shift towards smaller living spaces with the rise of condominium communities and so community arts, recreation, and garden spaces become so much more important and necessary!

In summary I would absolutely love to see a larger arts hub in the city that caters to all demographics, allows the community to come together and helps ease some of the financial and accessibility barriers that our arts community currently faces. We know that the arts positively affects community, brings people together and allows individuals to expand their potential. In the Drill Hall we already have a venue that could help revitalize our downtown core and provide a larger space while preserving a heritage structure and avoiding the financial strain of constructing a new venue in the future that could support our growing community.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this issue.
- Sarah Sabo