

Dear Mr Mayor and Members of City Council,

I want to register my absolute support for the Guelph Centre for Visual Arts' proposal to transform the Drill Hall into a very needed Arts Centre in Guelph, and vehement disagreement with the City Staff recommendation to Council to reject that proposal.

I am a practising, professional artist, with a 25 year career working in the arts - as a museum programmer, educator, curator, arts administrator and secondary school art teacher - and I am a member of the Guelph Studio Tour. I have lived in Guelph since 1980 and unfortunately have noticed a decline in political support over that time for the arts and culture in general.

I have read the Staff Report to Council and find it deficient in that it does not mention Guelph's Culture Plan 2030 adopted by Council in October 2023 which this proposal for the Drill Hall would help to implement. As Council knows (and is to be commended for), the Culture Plan 2030 articulates a long-term municipal and community strategy to stabilize and advance arts, heritage, and creative industry in Guelph.

Specific points from the Culture Plan 2030 that relate to this proposal are:

- Increase access to affordable space to create, rehearse, perform and exhibit
- Identify and build capacity for culture at municipal properties, including upgrading of amenities as required
- Identify potential new culture spaces, including performance spaces for audiences of 100 to 600 people and rehearsal, studio, and exhibition spaces, and consider public-private partnerships for development opportunities.
- **Support culture uses for the Drill Hall and Ontario Reformatory**

By failing to consider the potential of this proposal to implement the objectives of the Culture Plan 2030, staff have not presented City Council with a complete analysis.

If City Council wishes to realize the objectives of its Culture Plan in the timeline contemplated by the Plan, proposals such as this one must be taken seriously and financial resources made available. By ignoring the Culture Plan staff are treating Council's adoption of it as a meaningless exercise.

Unfortunately I will be out of the province on June 4 and so will not be able to attend the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

I strongly advocate that Council supports the Guelph Centre for the Creative Arts' proposal and rejects the Staff recommendation, as a major step in implementing its Culture Plan 2030.

Sincerely,
Patricia MacDonald