

Mayor Guthrie and Councillors,

As a Guelph citizen who volunteered for five years with the Guelph Arts Platform, a grassroots organization of artists of all disciplines who came together to create a collaborative arts space in Downtown Guelph between 2009 and 2013, I support the proposal of the Centre for Visual Arts (CVA) to animate the Drill Hall for the arts sector. The Platform was initially inspired by this space yet we lacked the organizational capacity to purchase or rent this building. With the mentoring support of Artscape expertise, our Request for Expressions of Interest established the need for such a space yet our search for an appropriate space was extremely challenging.

The City's investment in a 2021 consultant report that concluded there is no private market interest in purchasing the drill hall building and the recommendation for its use as a “community share space”, as well as the organizational capacity of the CVA, provides a unique opportunity for the City to support our arts sector.

In spite of Guelph's reputation for a vibrant arts sector, in fact the sector is small and relies on significant contributions from volunteers, community organizations and financial supports. (Source Guelph & Wellington County's Vital Signs Report 2023.)

I encourage you to seize this opportunity to strengthen the arts which contribute so much to the reputation of this city for fostering a caring community that promotes wholistic well-being.

Sincerely,
K. Vanessa Hyland