

PRESENTATION TO COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE

June 18, 2015

AOE Arts Council – Kathy MacLellan (Chair of the Board), Victoria Steele (Executive Director) and Anik Bouvrette (Member)

Regarding 2015-18 Term of Council Priorities

My name is Kathy MacLellan and I am Chair of the Board of the AOE Arts Council and have been running Rag and Bone Puppet Theatre, an Ottawa based company for young audiences for over 35 years. Our Arts Council represents 400 artists and arts organizations from across the City and for 28 years has worked to build a dynamic and sustainable arts community.

We were one of many participants who joined with the City to develop the *6-year Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage and Culture* approved unanimously by City Council in 2012. This Action Plan was designed to close gaps, meet emerging needs and enable a more sustainable sector by having comparable investment to other major cities. We have jointly formed the new Ottawa Cultural Alliance to work together with our cultural colleagues to see that this Plan is completed by 2018. We are now half-way through the plan and there is important unfinished business.

We're here today to speak on behalf of all the artists who contribute to our City with help from City arts funding. My small theatre company gets an annual grant of \$14,000, which helps us convince the Ontario Arts Council to give us \$10,000. This enables us to raise money from the private sector like the Community Foundation, and with this we are able to create a show and sell tickets to families and schools. Last year, we reached over 20,000 people and I want to tell you about one of them to illustrate the difference that the arts can make in our lives. We led a workshop in a school and there was a student on the autism spectrum who did not speak. She made a puppet, and got up with her group to present their story, and, for the first time in her life, she spoke. The arts bring people together, show us new ways of seeing, and give us all a voice.

I am **Victoria Steele, Executive Director** of the Arts Council and I have the honour of working to help our City's gifted artists succeed so that they may give to Ottawa the many demonstrable benefits that accrue to cities where cultural vibrancy is a priority. We understood that our Mayor and Council shared this belief and agreed with cultural investments, especially important now with raised expectations for Ottawa 2017. We are pleased to see Culture included in the Term of Council Priorities but are **surprised to see levels of investment that appear inconsistent with City messages and the Action Plan's road map.**

The key to the Action Plan is the Investment Plan addition of \$4.95 million to base operating funding for the cultural community to be phased in over the six year period 2013 to 2018. City Cultural Funding annually supports over 300 activities run by the community across the City. As Kathy's example demonstrates, this investment is a very good one. And, City research states that: "...direct funding to cultural organizations is the most cost effective way to ensure the delivery of quality

cultural activities". Studies show that one municipal investment dollar leverages between \$6 and \$12 from other revenue sources.

Ottawa's average per capita community funding remains well below the average of other major Canadian cities including Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. 2013 arts and festival funding shows the average is \$10.50/capita and Ottawa sits at \$7.22. We believe that our city also deserves to be a cultural capital so we still have work to be done.

The Term of Council Priority #41 on Page 110 proposes to add \$106,000 in 2015 over the Base of \$1 million invested by the previous Council and then make no additional investments in 2016 through 2018. **If so, the investment in the Action Plan over the 6 years would be \$3.85 million short of its stated goal.**

We value the much-needed investments being made to improve the Arts Court complex and understand that financial realities meant that over \$2 million was directed from the Action Plan. But artistic creativity and innovation relies on much more than bricks and mortar. **And we notice that, even if we factor in the Arts Court investment, an amount of \$1.714 million still remains outstanding to reach the Action Plan's goal by 2018.**

The *Action Plan* is a unanimously supported joint venture between the community and City Hall. **To have no further investment from the City over the next three years calls the planning process into question and our ability to get things done together.**

My name is Anik Bouvrette and I lead Tara Luz Danse, a francophone contemporary dance company committed to providing inspiring experiences for schools and the community. I have seen firsthand what the magic of the arts can do for a young person – quite literally transforming their lives and their world view. Arts funding is modest but can literally make all the difference from projects going ahead.

We sincerely urge Council to support the three requests of the Ottawa Cultural Alliance

- Maintain the integrity of this six year Action Plan
- Continue the joint commitment to see this plan through
- Ensure a minimum additional investment of \$1.714 million over the Action Plan's remaining three years into the **two priorities that would have the broadest impact across the cultural community.**

Much remains to be done and we wish to work with the City to collectively keep this plan on track and fulfill the many promises offered by investing in Ottawa's own arts community.