ACTIVITY REPORT JANUARY TO MARCH 2020

The beginning of the first quarter was very active for the museum. New programs were developed and implemented along with the return of several established programs. Response to these scheduled programs, both old and new, was at or near capacity and it was thought that the museum would experience a very positive Q1. Unfortunately the closure of Recreational and Cultural facilities on March 13 due to the Covid-19 pandemic caused the cancellation of 3 scheduled adult programs, March break children’s programming plus two room rentals and one group tour thus negatively impacting the first quarter of 2020. Had these events proceeded as originally planned, it is believed that the museum would have recorded an increase in Q1 attendance over Q1 of 2019.

Currently, the plan is to reoffer some of the adult programing in the second quarter while, unfortunately, the room rentals and March break programming cannot be recovered. Staff is working on developing new youth programing that can be offered in Q2. It should be noted, that although staff plan to offer additional new programing in the second quarter to help offset the first quarter losses, this is dependent on the re-opening of cultural and recreational facilities and the lifting of public gathering bans in the Province of Ontario currently in place due to Covid-19.

QUARTERLY ATTENDANCE

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2020 BUSINESS PLAN

The first exhibit in the Pratt Gallery of 2020 was an in-house generated exhibit to replace the planned "Art of China" travelling exhibition from the Royal Ontario Museum. Due to unrealized sponsorship of $8,000 to cover the cost of the ROM exhibit, staff developed the exhibit “OUR PAINTING PAST” which highlighted the museum’s permanent Art Collection and told the story of the museum’s painting group. This group formed under the direction of the museum curator Helen Shearing in the 1970’s. An artist herself, Mrs. Shearing would hold painting classes at the museum, often using artefacts from the collection as the subject matter for the classes to paint. This painting group would eventually evolve into the Tillsonburg and District Craft Guild that would, in turn, create the Station Arts Centre. This exhibit was very popular with local residents. Visitors shared stories with staff about the art classes and their memories of Mrs. Shearing.

The popular Lunch & Learn Lecture Series began during the quarter, although only one of the planned two lectures for the period occurred. The first lecture by museum volunteer, Laurel Beechey “China’s Hero: Dr. Tillson Lever Harrison” was presented in February, while the second lecture by museum volunteer Joan Weston featuring the continuing story of Tillsonburg’s early Railroad history scheduled for March had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Normally the series is offered on the last Thursday and Friday of each month, February through May. Friday is a repeat of Thursday so the maximum number of patrons may be accommodated. Prior to the mandated closure of the facility, the Friday lectures were booked at 100% capacity while the Thursday lectures were booked between 40% – 100% capacity depending on the lecture date. It is hoped that the complete series will be accommodated during the second quarter, however that will depend on the Covid-19 pandemic situation. If the museum remains closed for the majority of Q2, this popular series will be moved to the Q3-4 section of the business plan to avoid disappointing museum patrons.

The Mayor’s Levee, Family Day Open House and the Valentine’s Day Tea were all successfully completed during Q 1. Family Day saw over 100 visitors participate in the planned programing of historic games, crafts and tours of Annandale House. The Valentine’s Day Tea, a new program for 2020, was filled to 98% capacity with patrons enjoying tea and a talk on the history of Valentines. Patrons were also given the opportunity to make a historically inspired Valentine to take home. The in-class Historic Valentines school programming, which had been booked by three classes were cancelled due to Work To Rule action by the teacher’s union, while the ST. Patrick’s Day Luncheon, Princess Aurora Tea Party and March Break programming were cancelled due to the Covid-19 legislated closure of the museum.

Preliminary planning for Turtlefest, Canada Day Open House & Fun Fair and the Dolly & Teddy Bear events was undertaken during the quarter. The fate of these events is uncertain at this time. Staff is working on developing other events to occur in
the third and fourth quarter if the Covid-19 pandemic prevents these planned events from occurring.

Throughout the first quarter the Culture & Heritage Program Coordinator developed and promoted new in-class program offerings for the local schools and finalized details with local caterers for the Lunch & Learn Series and the various Teas & Socials planned for 2020. The Culture & Heritage Program Coordinator also produced advertising material for the various events and the exhibits hosted throughout Q1, including managing the museum’s various social media accounts. Assistance was also given in the creation of the Our Painting Past exhibition.

The exhibition spaces within Annandale House were changed over by the Collections & Exhibit Specialist during this quarter. An exhibit featuring the story of Tillsonburg’s hockey history was installed in the ¼ ceiling room on the second floor while and exhibit highlighting the museum’s hat collection was installed in the third floor tower room. This exhibit was guest curated by one the museum’s collection volunteers, who with the assistance of the Collection & Exhibit Specialist, completed all aspects of the exhibit from pre-planning to installation. The exhibit “Our Painting Past” was installed in the Pratt Gallery.

The museum received objects, documents, and photographs from 11 donors this quarter. These donations resulted in 44 items added to the permeant collection. Of particular interest is the hand-held brass teachers School bell which came from Rolph Street Public School and a series of photographs from the 1950s which feature local Tillsonburg businesses of that period. A small collection of World War One items from Tillsonburg resident Sidney Stass was also added to the permanent collection. The items in this small collection were not already represented in the museum’s permeant WWI collection and add greatly to this collection.

During the quarter Volunteers began scanning, processing and the data entry into Pastperfect of the museum’s collection of sheet music.

Collections and Exhibitions Specialist attended a Mount Making for Museum Exhibitions course taught by Canadian Conservation Institute.

The Culture & Heritage Manager/Curator oversaw and worked in conjunction with museum staff to complete the planned exhibits and events for the first quarter, as well as, pre-planning activities for the remainder of the year. Pre-planning was also initiated for the celebration of Tillsonburg’s 150th Anniversary of Incorporation in 2022. The Culture & Heritage Manager also provided information for the Departmental Service Review currently being completed. Considerable time in the last weeks of the quarter was spent by the Culture & Heritage Manager/Curator in cancelling, rescheduling and reworking the Museum’s 2020 Calendar of exhibits and events due to the Covid-19 pandemic closure of the museum until further notice.
COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN (CSP) LINKAGE

1. Excellence in Local Government
   ☐ Demonstrate strong leadership in Town initiatives
   ☐ Streamline communication and effectively collaborate within local government
   ☒ Demonstrate accountability

2. Economic Sustainability
   ☐ Support new and existing businesses and provide a variety of employment opportunities
   ☐ Provide diverse retail services in the downtown core
   ☐ Provide appropriate education and training opportunities in line with Tillsonburg’s economy

3. Demographic Balance
   ☒ Make Tillsonburg an attractive place to live for youth and young professionals
   ☒ Provide opportunities for families to thrive
   ☐ Support the aging population and an active senior citizenship

4. Culture and Community
   ☐ Promote Tillsonburg as a unique and welcoming community
   ☒ Provide a variety of leisure and cultural opportunities to suit all interests
   ☐ Improve mobility and promote environmentally sustainable living

ATTACHMENTS
None