

Station Arts Centre
41 Bridge St. W.
Tillsonburg, Ontario N4G 5P2

Presentation to Town Council January 28, 2019

Presenter: Gale Connor, President

Mayor Molnar, Councilors & Town Staff...

For those of you who may not know, our 'mission' is to 'promote the arts in the community', our 'vision' is 'arts, culture, community & heritage'.

Facilities like ours do not exist without the support of dedicated volunteers, the Town of Tillsonburg, local businesses and organizations. We only exist and grow because they believe in who we are and what we do.

We partner with community groups, agencies & the Town with things like the Creative Imagination Festival which is part of Turtlefest, community Beyond the Garden Gate Tours, Holiday Tour of Homes, Holiday Arts Market, Help Portrait, Woodstock Art Gallery's Visual Elements 360, Oxford County events etc. We saw 27,695 people through our facility in 2018.

We were granted use of our building in 1982. In the mid-Nineties, the Town permitted us to relocate a second heritage train station in Tillsonburg to the property and construct an interconnecting gallery space between. We have upgraded the entrance doors to barrier free & added a barrier free washroom. We have upgraded & maintained the building all along. Although you had a fleeting visit to the Station, we invite any & all of Council for a more in depth tour of this historic facility.

I come with a proposed agreement, known as a Memorandum of Understanding, which more clearly shows the 2 facets of this partnership with the Town. It speaks to both Arts & Culture, & Tourism. The Station can & has affected change for the better, in our community, through this relationship & these initiatives.

We are asking for a 3 year term commitment. We did not request an operational increase for 2019, only consideration that 2020 & beyond be indexed to inflation. Current circumstances & our valued partnership of many years were taken into consideration with this request.

The Town & Station face a new challenge. Although we have lost access for public space & storage, working together we have found short term solutions. We creatively use & maximize the space we have available. Upcoming programming is quite extensive & keeping things organized & running smoothly is crucial.

To find a long term solution, the Station has been working to research alternatives to gain essential space.

We have given our Town Liaison a proposal to address functionality & accessibility. Our recommendation is an addition to the existing building. This would significantly improve access for the general public to programming & cultural experiences.

We realize that we would affect the playground associated with Sonbeam Daycare located to the south of the Station. No discussions have taken place as this is a proposal only. We have not approached any businesses or Station supporters to see if they would be willing to provide some "in kind or reduced rate" assistance.

As a Municipal building, we feel the addition becomes part of the structure & therefore Town owned. We are, however, willing to: possibly invest, search out grant opportunities & speak with businesses & Station supporters to enable moving the project forward in the most efficient way possible. We need the space to do what we do, to improve and expand on cultural experiences, & participation through: exhibitions, classes, workshops for adults, youth & children, in-house groups, PA days, March Break camp, summer programs etc.

We are a hardworking organization that tries & succeeds in being as self sufficient as we can. We opened the facility to rentals as a source of income to help pay the bills but this can limit what & when exhibitions can be shown. While this is not the main focus of income, it does provide us with some financial ease.

Our e-waste program also provides a stream of income & we are trying to maximize this. Income is split between us & our partnership with the Tillsonburg Scout Association who also provide manpower to look after the bin. We have been very successful in redirecting e-waste & keeping it out of landfill sites. From 2014 - 2017 we have redirected over 1 million lbs of e-waste. For councilors who don't know, we were awarded the Tillsonburg Chamber of Commerce Environmental Award in 2017. We are the #1 non-profit/charitable organization in Ontario for e-waste collection. A bin is filled & replaced biweekly. Each filled bin averages 7,700 lbs. In 2018 alone, we redirected a total of 225,786 lbs away from landfill. We are working with the Town to establish a 2nd site at the Transfer Station. We have approval from OES for a 2nd bin & are waiting to hear from the Town when this can take place. As requested by the Town, we are in process of moving our established site from the parking lot at Bidwell & Bridge St. W. to private property across from our caboose. This will allow uninterrupted collection, maintenance & surveillance. We hope to have this done shortly.

We work very hard to give back fair value for the assistance you graciously provide to us. We appreciate & enjoy our partnership with the Town. We want to see Tillsonburg grow culturally & be a platform to help with that. On a personal note, I believe in the Station & what it does & can do. I believe in the partnership with the Town & how we can grow together & thank you for the opportunity to enter into a renewed relationship.