

**THE**  
**BIG**  
**PICTURE**  
**REVISITED**

Prepared by:  
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**A Report of the November 2009  
Arts Community Consultation**

Prepared for:  
The City of Hamilton  
The Arts Advisory Commission

January 2010



Hamilton



The Big Picture Revisited, Workers Arts & Heritage Centre, November 14, 2009. Photograph by Cees van Gernerden

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## **Introduction – Context and Consultation Design**

The Arts Advisory Commission (AAC) to the City of Hamilton hosted a day-long event that brought members of the diverse arts community together to learn and plan around the local arts scene. Nearly 80 participants representing a range of art practices engaged in small group discussions that will shape the future work of the AAC. This report reflects the small group discussions and will inform the next steps for the AAC.

### **Context**

The AAC is an appointed body of the Hamilton City Council and is comprised of a diverse range of stakeholders in the Hamilton community. It has been in existence for 15 years and has support from the Department of Culture staff for its activities.

The group has many functions, including:

- Informing Council of achievements and issues in the local arts community;
- Selecting and recommending winners of the annual Hamilton Arts Awards;
- Monitoring and assisting with the implementation of the Public Art Programme;
- Revising the “Policy for the Arts” annually;
- Recommending educational and promotional activities for the stabilization and strengthening of the arts community.

With an acknowledged re-emergence in the local arts community, the AAC needs to keep apprised of current local conversations and to hear from key stakeholders about opportunities and challenges in moving a healthy arts community forward.

The AAC organized a day-long education and consultation event on November 14, 2009. This event was planned to hear from individual artists and arts organizations about how the AAC should shape its work to help support and strengthen the arts community.

### **Consultation Design**

The AAC invited local artists and representatives from arts organizations to the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre to learn and share through presentations and facilitated small group discussions. Participants were engaged in three presentations in the morning. These presentations aligned with issues arising within the community and included:

- Juan Bohorquez – Engaging City Hall
- Susan Wright – Support for Individual Artists
- Ivan Jurakic – Sustainability of Arts Organizations

Each speaker described the topic area as it pertained to their local communities and

proposed solutions from those experiences. These presentations encouraged and shaped the small group discussions that followed. After lunch, participants were engaged in small group discussions, the topics for which were chosen by the participants at the time of registration. There were six groups and each group had approximately 15 participants. A facilitator and note-taker were assigned to each small group discussion. While the topics differed between groups, each was asked to describe the local situation, identify challenges/barriers and strengths/opportunities pertaining to their area of focus. There were three different topic areas: 1) Support for Individual Artists, 2) Engaging City Hall, and 3) Sustainability of Arts Organizations.

## Summary of Presentations

### **Juan Bohorquez – Engaging Our City Hall**

Kitchener-Waterloo Arts and Culture Advisory Committee

Juan Bohorquez is a jewelry artist in Kitchener-Waterloo. His presentation focused on how the local arts community engages City Hall.

Kitchener-Waterloo has an appointed Arts and Culture Advisory Committee which meets monthly to advise the City around strategic cultural directions. It is comprised of one member of council (with whom the committee shares a good relationship), eleven community members and one youth. The committee provides and receives reports with the City Council monthly.

There is a permanent subcommittee called the Public Arts Working Group. One of the major successes of the Public Arts Working Group in the recent past was a new initiative that projects local artists work onto a large cube over the Kitchener City Hall for free. The Digital Public Art Projection project is accessible to all local artists. City Hall also makes its interior space available to artists to show their work and includes a high school show annually to support emerging artists. Additionally, the Committee has engaged in cultural mapping in which the assets of the arts community are examined – Who is doing what? Where are they doing it? With what resources?

The Committee has also tackled funding and economic issues. Currently 1% of each City civic project with construction budgets over \$100,000 to arts programming funding. Their influence has also reached the City's Economic Development vision to include arts, culture and business. Finally, the Prosperity Council of Waterloo Region supports private sector employment in creative industries by linking arts to the local business community.

### **Susan Wright – Supporting Individual Artists**

The Toronto Arts Council

Susan Wright works with the Toronto Arts Council (TAC). The TAC is an arms-length council that acts as a foundation and is able to provide grants to organizations and individual artists. Currently five City Councillors are engaged in the work of adjudicating grants, \$9 million for arts organizations and \$2.5 million for individual artists are allocated each year.

Toronto currently lags in terms of arts funding and the TAC continues to advocate for additional support. The message for municipalities is twofold: first, supporting a local creative community is good for people as there are social impacts from this investment, and second, municipal support can leverage provincial and national resources for the arts.

The role of the individual artist is critically important and needs to be understood as the centre of the arts community. Artists are entrepreneurs and everything depends on the individual artists working. According to recent research, 6% of the workforce engage in the creative industry. This is a highly educated element of the workforce but one whose average income is only \$20,000. Artists are compelled to do their work but they require resources to make it economically viable.

### **Ivan Jurakic – Sustainability of Arts Organizations**

Curator, Cambridge Galleries

Ivan Jurakic is a visual artist and the curator at Cambridge Galleries in Cambridge, Ontario. For many years he worked for both the Hamilton & Region Arts Council from 1994-2000, and Hamilton Artists Inc. from 1994-2002. He remains involved in the arts scene and continues to live in Hamilton. According to Jurakic the grassroots growth of a cultural sector on James Street North is a key component in the slow revitalization of downtown Hamilton. In the last five years, individuals such as Bryce Kanbara, Dave Kuruc, Colina Maxwell, Gary Buttrum, Donna Lee MacDonald, and Jeremy Freiburger, among others, have helped to nurture the growth of storefront galleries, arts organizations, boutiques and studios along James Street North. Their collective efforts have had an important impact in defining an

identity for the arts community that did not exist prior to 2002. Significant growth in the arts and culture sector is an early indicator of the health of a neighbourhood, yet unlike many other urban centres, on James Street North individuals and organizations tend to own their own buildings. This gives the arts community a real stake in the long term growth and development of this neighbourhood. Alongside other cultural initiatives, restaurants, clubs, and area homeowners (like myself), these initiatives are transforming the area. If in the past, artists and cultural organizations were often forced out of urban neighbourhoods by the inevitability of gentrification and rental increases, here, because property has been so undervalued, the artistic community benefits by being the owners. And while we should celebrate these successes it is still too early to be satisfied. It is critical to remember that the neighbourhood is still in transition, and that despite the popularity of the monthly Friday Night Art Crawls for instance, that the arts community still struggles with sustainability, let alone profitability. The arts community is still finding its footings, and despite owning real estate, remains largely unappreciated and underfunded in comparison to similar sized cities across the country. Simply put, the City has not done enough. The City of Hamilton needs to find the means to support the efforts of those organizations and individuals making a difference on James Street North, if not through grants or funding, then by using tax incentives, by-law variances to accommodate live work space and street

festivals, or perhaps recognizing James Street North as an Art District. It is important to acknowledge the good work that has been done in this community but it is critical to find the means by which to sustain this positive momentum and to support it so that it can survive the next five years and beyond.

## Summary of Focus Groups

The following are summaries of the six small group discussions. Each focus group summary contains the identified opportunities, challenges and recommendations to the AAC. Each focus group had many important observations, opinions, and suggestions. A full record of the notes from each focus group is appended for detail.

### Support for Individual Artists – A

The group identified that the strong sense of community spirit was a core strength related to this topic. From a funding perspective, the lack of a mechanism for supporting artists individually was articulated. Additionally, the often bureaucratic processes artists are expected to follow to fund their work were identified as problematic. More philosophically, the group considered a few key themes: the apparent lack of importance or value that is placed on the arts, the lack of understanding around the range of art making practices, and the impetus for art as an expression versus a social tool.

The group identified a range of suggestions for strengthening support for individual artists. They recommended that the Hamilton arts community...

- educate City Hall concerning the importance of arts and about the diversity of art making practices (each

legitimate and important);

- facilitate open communication between the arts community and the City of Hamilton, the AAC and its work;
- develop and communicate opportunities for artists in terms of professional development, potential funding, and projects;
- strategize ways to connect to the growing ‘support local’ movement by encouraging City Hall to give local arts as gifts, having a presence at Eat Local events, etc.;
- advocate for artists to be financially supported through ,for example, paying artists to animate streetscapes and supporting a living wage<sup>1</sup> for artists.

For the full focus group notes, please see Appendix B.

### Support for Individual Artists – B

The group agreed that support for individual artists is a critical issue, resulting in the need for many to subsidize their work with other employment and that artists are not being compensated for the work that they do. Thus,

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<sup>1</sup> According to Vibrant Calgary: *A Living Wage is the amount of income an individual or family requires to meet their basic needs, to maintain a safe, decent standard of living in their communities and to save for future needs and goals.* ([www.vibrantcalgary.com](http://www.vibrantcalgary.com))

local artists need access to financial support. A serious challenge indentified by the group was the lack of comprehensive, focused, and strategic communication and planning efforts. The opportunities named were more attention and promotion for the arts in the local media and an arms-length group that could administer money to individual artists in the form of grants and other investments.

The group identified a range of suggestions for strengthening support for individual artists. They recommended that the Hamilton arts community...

- inform a funding strategy that is equitable across sectors, includes individual grants and support for loans and mortgages for artists;
- focus on an education strategy that includes a better understanding of the arts in the local community and making the arts part of school curricula;
- provide a collective voice to artists with a strong local presence and focus on artists as voters;
- advance the marketing, promotion, and publicity of the local arts scene with a stronger connection to the media, developing an open-concept gallery at the new City Hall and including the arts in major civic activities;
- advocate for professional support and development for artists in the form of health care, legal aid, rent-to-own

opportunities and building skills around business development.

For the full focus group notes, please see Appendix B.

### **Support for Individual Artists – C**

This group identified a variety of barriers and opportunities to supporting individual artists. The complex relationship between artist integrity and being accessible to jurors and the commercial market was identified as a barrier to developing support for individual artists. Participants described the need for professional and human resource development.

The group identified a range of suggestions for strengthening support for individual artists. They recommended that the Hamilton arts community...

- build on the current change in atmosphere and culture (a growing momentum around dialogue and collaboration), exploring and identifying possibilities;
- explore options for providing support to local artists by looking at models that allow arts councils to provide funding, i.e. Toronto Arts Council;
- proactively promote and enable artistic endeavours for artists to sell work, develop promotional spaces, and provide legal spaces for posters;

- examine the potential support for artists from the Building Department and City Hall by advocating for transparency and clarity in zoning, tax incentives and financial incentives for under-used buildings;
- promote initiatives that support artists in the community through a cultural enablement plan, mentorship opportunities, and strategic partnerships.

For the full focus group notes, please see Appendix B.

### **Engaging City Hall – A**

This group explored ways to better connect the local arts community with City Hall. Two key strengths were detailed. First, there is great potential for connection in the public and private sector particularly with the new City Hall and an impending election next year. Second, the arts community in Hamilton is progressive and unique. A number of barriers were also identified including: the image of the arts community, communication breakdowns in the arts community (both internally and externally), and a City that does not demonstrate innovation in terms of fostering the arts.

The group identified a range of suggestions for engaging City Hall. They recommended that the Hamilton arts community...

- explore models of arms-length arts

councils that can provide funding and advocacy for local artists;

- develop its message, enable ongoing networking and provide mentorship opportunities;
- advocate for an increase in the municipal arts budget (for example, 1% of the City's budget is dedicated annually to the arts);
- keep apprised of opportunities to capitalize on (for example, being a part of the opening at City Hall, the Pan Am Games);
- support the community to keep researching best practices to understand how other communities and municipalities support their artists and arts organizations.

For the full focus group notes, please see Appendix B.

### **Engaging City Hall – B**

This group identified a number of barriers and solutions for the arts community engaging City Hall. The barriers include bureaucracy and 'silo-ing', lack of support and communication, and lack of understanding around the importance of arts. The solutions included getting to know elected officials (and educating them), capitalizing on upcoming opportunities, and advocating for housing, pensions, and income support for artists.

The group identified a range of suggestions for engaging City Hall. They recommended

that the Hamilton arts community...

- develop communication mechanisms to tell the story of the sector and its members;
- educate City Hall about the work of artists and the role of the arts in our community (for example organizing a ‘Take A Councillor to Work Day’);
- advocate for an increase in the City grant budget to better support local artists (including housing support);
- support the AAC through a review of the selection process, the identification of champions/advocates and resources to develop communication strategies;
- work to build support and consensus within the arts community and beyond (to broaden its base of supporters).

For the full focus group notes, please see Appendix B.

### **Sustainability of Arts Organizations**

This group identified six core elements of sustainability for the arts community in Hamilton: 1) financially, arts organizations need a range of funding options and municipal funding commitments can drive funding from other levels of government, 2) operationally, organizations need additional resources, 3) in terms of infrastructure, the arts community needs spaces and opportunities to share those spaces, 4) in terms of their profile, the arts community needs to spread its message

about its importance and impact locally, 5) for community building, organizations need support to collaborate with each other, 6) in terms of core constituency, support for the professional development of artists is needed (particularly as it intersects with the education sector).

The group identified a range of suggestions for increasing the sustainability of arts organizations. They recommended that the Hamilton arts community...

- engage in community building between arts organizations by working with the Culture Division of the City and developing an inventory of organizations and artists;
- develop an arms-length organization to assist the City in funding arts organizations outside of the political process;
- explore communication mechanisms to inform decision makers and the community about the arts as an important sector;
- advocate for the City to provide subsidies to arts organizations through shared spaces, rent and tax relief;
- find opportunities to link with different sectors such as business and industry.

For the full focus group notes, please see Appendix B.

### **Summary of Evaluations**

The evaluations were largely positive with comments particularly around the importance of this event and the desire to do it again. Participants also used their evaluation comments as an opportunity to indicate the importance of action and follow up after such an event. Other comments challenged the organizers to better engage marginalized and diverse communities and to solve some logistical issues.

## **Analysis and Recommendations**

While the focus groups were organized around three different topics and each group identified a variety of strengths and challenges within the community, five clear themes emerged for moving forward to strengthen the arts scene in Hamilton. These themes are not organized in order of priority.

### **Building Understanding and Appreciation of Arts**

Every group recommended that the AAC promote the value and importance of the arts community. The scope of this recommendation is twofold: first, that art-making be respected as a legitimate profession, and second, that the local cultural community be known and valued. The participants named the arts community and the AAC as potential drivers for profile-building and education.

The groups described a variety of arenas where this education needs to happen:

- The City of Hamilton
- The community at large
- The market of potential art buyers
- Schools
- The private and industrial sectors.

The participants provided some creative mechanisms for developing this education including “Take Your Councillor to Work Day”, roundtable discussions, an online presence, educating councilors about arts

organizations, and local tourism brochures to incorporate local art.

### **Funding**

Funding emerged as a critical issue in the arts community. The participants recommendations around funding reform centre on three areas, 1) more funding is needed, 2) creative and new solutions are needed to increase financial support to arts and 3) reform in the way support is delivered is required.

Each focus group expressed that the Hamilton community needs more financial investment in arts and culture. Current funding pots are not adequate to support local artists and, therefore, cannot develop a vibrant and healthy arts community. One of the groups described that currently, “the level of support is miniscule.” Every group called for additional money for the local arts community.

Many of the groups talked about moving the arts conversation into the economic sphere better understanding and articulating the economic development possibilities of a vibrant cultural community. Additionally, some groups indicated that local artists need to be paid for their work through a commitment from the City to, for example, purchase local art for all visiting dignitaries and to pay artists to work in schools.

Another important funding issue focused on the delivery of funding. Most groups described bureaucratic and unclear processes for artists and arts organizations to access money. Four out of the six focus groups recommended the development of a funding body, arms-length to the City of Hamilton to ensure that individual artists receive grants to support their work. Since a particular model was not articulated through the consultation, it could be the work of the AAC to research and propose a model that fits with Hamilton’s local reality. This would include investigating the capacity and openness of existing organizations to take up this work.

### **Support Beyond Money**

Artists require support beyond money to do their work. Some of these supports were focused on solutions for lack of space including subsidized and more affordable studio/ living spaces, tax relief, zoning clarity, and offering financial incentives for utilizing under-used buildings.

Additionally the participants described the need for increased promotional opportunities for artists in the form of increased access to media (for example the City purchasing advertising space in the Hamilton Spectator for local emerging artists), support for showing

artists work in public places and providing spaces to legally post posters.

Finally, other supports included professional development opportunities, health care and counseling, business skills development and mentorship.

### **Arts Community Collaboration**

There was an acknowledgement among the groups that the local arts community needs to come together to better understand each other and develop collective messages to promote collaboration individually, organizationally and across sectors. There are two issues, first that the story of the arts community is a critical one and sharing this story is an important opportunity for moving forward. Second, some of the groups identified the need to develop co-operative or collaborative models to share space, resources, and mentorship.

### **Capitalizing on Opportunities**

Many of the participants said that the arts community needs to position itself to respond to local opportunities as they emerge. There was a sense through the focus group discussions that now is a time of many upcoming opportunities that the arts community should capitalize on. Three examples of upcoming opportunities were named. First, the re-opening of City Hall and understanding how

local artists can play a role was named. For example, can a local gallery space be available? Will the City purchase local artists' work to enhance the new space? Second, while there was an acknowledgement that the impact may be short-lived, the hosting of the Pan Am games represents a momentum in the community that may have a place for arts. Finally, there is a major thrust in the community to support all things 'local' (particularly local food). One group thought that it is timely for the local arts community to partner with the Eat Local movement. This was suggested in addition to other possibilities for building cross-sector and cross-community synergies.

### **Next Steps**

The conversations at The Big Picture Revisited event were instructive and important. Participants challenged the AAC to move forward on their recommendations and continue communicating with the arts sector. To that end, the AAC will work on the following next steps through the spring and winter of 2010:

- Feedback on the report will be solicited from the arts community. Please send any comments to [artsforum@hamilton.ca](mailto:artsforum@hamilton.ca).
- The AAC will use the recommendations in this report to create its 2010 Work Plan
- The Work Plan will be shared at a community event planned for May 2010.

**Appendix A – The Big Picture Revisited Program**

## THE BIG PICTURE, A BRIEF HISTORY

Three large group photographs of the Hamilton Arts Community have been taken over the past 15 years: *A Fine Day in Hammertown* at the downtown Eaton's Centre in 1995; *The Big Picture*, organized by the ad hoc arts advocacy group The Big Picture Committee, at City Hall in 2000; and *The Big Picture 2*, also at City Hall in 2006. "These events were a show of strength and a declaration that artists are a force to be reckoned with," explains Bryce Kanbara, visual artist, curator, and owner of 'you me gallery' in Hamilton. Everyone is invited to participate in a fourth photograph of the Hamilton Arts Community to be taken at The Big Picture Revisited.

The AAC has organized The Big Picture Revisited to better understand the current concerns and needs of the evolving arts community in Hamilton. The AAC has invited artists, arts groups, and experienced representatives from other communities to come together for a day to share ideas for strengthening the Hamilton arts community, for supporting local artists and arts organizations, and for encouraging an ongoing dialogue with the City of Hamilton — essentially to look at the "big picture."

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The AAC wishes to thank the City of Hamilton, Workers Arts and Heritage Centre, City of Hamilton Culture Division staff, Mayor Fred Eisenberger, City Council, Juan Bohorquez, Ivan Jurakic, Susan Wright, Monica Bennett, Denise Doyle, Cathy Masterson, Cindy Sue McCormack, Debra Seabrook, Jennie Vengris, Cees van Gemerden, Bread and Roses Cafe Catering, Brian Kelly, Lady Hamilton Club, Dave Kuruc and *H Magazine*, Mixed Media, The Factory, Hamilton Youth Steel Orchestra, Nove Studio, and most importantly, the Hamilton arts community.

### The Arts Advisory Commission

Patti Randazzo Beckett, Co-chair

Renee Wetselaar, Co-chair

Anne Cibola, Gary DePodesta, Sky Gilbert, Brian Lane, Karen Logan,

Nancy McKibbin Gray, Anne McLean, Josefa Radman,

Dr. Eli Tshibwabwa, Jahan Zeb

The Arts Advisory  
Commission (AAC)  
of the City of  
Hamilton presents



# THE BIG PICTURE

## REVISITED

**KEEP TALKING.  
WE'RE LISTENING.**  
Together, let's take action.

**Arts and Artists Forum**

**SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 14, 2009**

**10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**Workers Arts and Heritage Centre  
51 Stuart Street  
Hamilton, Ontario**

  
Hamilton

  
Workers Arts and Heritage Centre

## SPEAKERS

**Juan Bohorquez** is a jewellery designer and sculptor based in Kitchener, Ontario. He has been an active member of the arts community since launching his business Cynosure Jewelry with his partner at Globe Studios in 2003. As Chair of the Board at Globe Studios (2006-2008), Juan was instrumental in reviving the Spring and Fall Art Shows at Globe, and he helped to bring several important arts events to the studios, including Doors Open Waterloo Region, Ontario Arts Council's Spotlight festival in 2008 and 2009, Ontario Arts Council Grants Information Seminars, and local high school graduate exhibitions. Juan has received several awards for his artwork and was nominated for the Kitchener Waterloo Arts Awards in 2008 for his involvement in and support of the arts in the Waterloo Region. Since his election to the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee for the City of Kitchener in 2008, Juan has continued his support for and commitment to the arts and crafts communities in the Waterloo Region.

**Ivan Jurakic** is the Curator at Cambridge Galleries and a visual artist. Since 2000, he has curated numerous exhibitions and collaborated in the development of several prominent touring exhibitions including: "Sara Angelucci: Somewhere In Between"; "Emblems of the Enigma: The Art of Vessna Perunovich"; and "James Carl: Do You Know What, A Survey 1990-2008." His reviews have been published in *C Magazine*, *Espace Sculpture*, and *Fuse*, and his writing has appeared in exhibition catalogues for Hamilton Artists Inc., the Art Gallery of Hamilton, The Tree Museum, McIntosh Gallery and Cambridge Galleries. He was recently invited to sit on a panel of five curators from across Canada to adjudicate

the 2009 Sobey Art Award. He received his Honours BA from the University of Guelph and his MFA from the State University of New York at Buffalo. His installations and artworks have been exhibited in Canada and the United States, and he has been the recipient of multiple artist grants, as well as several project grants from the Ontario Arts Council as a principal of the TH&B artist collective. He lives in Hamilton.

**Susan Wright** is Director of Operations for Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation, a position she has held since 2000. In this role, Susan advocates for support for artists and arts organizations with City Council and compiles arts research and statistics in support of this work. She sits on a number of external committees including IRAFF (Intergovernmental Forum for Arts Funders and Foundations), Placing Creativity (chaired by Kevin Stolarick at the Martin Prosperity Institute), and the Creative Spaces Enablers Network. Working with the IRAFF Economic Indicators Subcommittee, Susan has been a key participant in the development of CADAC, Canada's new web based arts funding database, and now sits on the Board of Directors. Susan's other responsibilities at TAC include financial management and general operations.

Prior to joining TAC, Susan spent five years as General Manager of Toronto Artscape, numerous years as an arts consultant and manager of small arts organizations.

### Event Facilitators:

**Monica Bennett, Denise Doyle, Cathy Masterson, Cindy Sue McCormack, Debra Seabrook, and Jennie Vengris**

## SCHEDULE

**9:30 a.m. Registration and Breakfast**

**10:15 a.m. Welcome**  
Renee Wetselaar, AAC Co-chair and MC  
Mayor Fred Eisenberger  
Workers Arts and Heritage Centre (WAHC)

**10:30 a.m. Mandate and Program Overview, Culture Division**  
Anna Bradford, Director of Culture

**10:45 a.m. Engaging City Hall**, Juan Bohorquez, Kitchener

**11:10 a.m. Sustainability of Arts Organizations**, Ivan Jurakic, Cambridge / Hamilton

**11:35 a.m. Support for Individual Artists**, Susan Wright, Toronto

**12:00 p.m. Working Lunch**

**12:15 p.m. New Zoning...Moving Forward, Presentation and Q&A**  
Al Fletcher, City of Hamilton Planning and Economic Development Department

**12:45 p.m. Break**

**1:15 p.m. Discussion Groups**  
Discussion groups will commence for each of the three topics addressed by the morning speakers: Engaging City Hall; Sustainability of Arts Organizations; Support for Individual Artists.

**2:30 p.m. Break**

**2:45 p.m. Discussion Groups**  
Each group will identify its top five priorities.

**3:15 p.m. Results Presentations and Open Mic**  
Each group will share its top five priorities and there will be an open mic session for those who have not had a chance to participate.

**3:45 p.m. Where Do We Go From Here: Next Steps**, Renee Wetselaar

**4:15 p.m. The Big Picture 2009 Photo Shoot**, Cees van Gernerden

## Appendix B – Full Focus Group Notes

### Support for Individual Artists (A) – Notes

- Better communication between the City and artists about upcoming opportunities maybe Arts Hamilton
- Not enough time for public arts
- Professional Development!
- Speak City Hall's language
- Artists in schools – paid
- Making principles that the City can stand by and holding them to it – accountability
- Communicate it's official plan for the new City Hall and opportunities for artists\*
- AAC should provide more guidance around this
- Paid to work as artists at the market (Oakville) – street artists have social value too
- City to recognize that there are a variety of ways to remunerate the artists
- Art as solution with youth – no process at present – pay artists to work youth
- Why do we assume support means money?
- Building 'local art' – doctors office with Ikea art – yuck
- Buy local network – tap into the existing movement in Hamilton
- No mechanism for funding individual artists
- No support and artists run out of energy – too many levels of administrative approval
- No support for art as graffiti prevention
- No clear process to ask for money
- City Hall needs a better understanding about the diversity of art making – AAC to educate
- Gentrification
- Lack of unity within the arts community
- What do artists give up for money – political freedom
- Art is an essential part of society – positive mental health outcomes
- Your work is not worthy of support if it is not used as a social tool
- Need to recognize arts intrinsic value
- Need to recognize art as a professional activity
- Grants at the local level
- Needs \$
- Rent – free space for artists
- Pay artists to engage youth and children – create murals on schools and other places
- Strengths – Community spirit
- What should be on the work plan of the AAC to better support individual artists?
  - Education – what is artists' work? What is support?
  - Communication – what opportunities currently exist for artists?

## Support for Individual Artists (B) – Notes

- Not doing this very well
- Structural/stereotype problems
- There is a need to hold city responsible for promises they make
- Need to breakdown stereotypes
- Need to recognize the value of artists
- Should we see this as an Economic development program – focus on \$\$\$
- Need structural change
- Use Economic Development department language/terminology to seek funding and support
- Look at government issues around “bonusing”
- Artists don’t have a collective voice – on a city by city basis
- Artists need to agree on what we need
- Need for artists grants
- Current application process (Arts Council) too time consuming and insufficient \$\$ available
- Hamilton doesn’t have enough part time jobs available for artists so they can support themselves
- Look at Toronto Artist Health Centre – focus on artists
- Need follow up – there has been talks but never any follow through on promises/discussion
- Need a mission – something to get behind
- Education – there isn’t enough about the issues
- There are lots of meetings but no means to distribute information

- Need to broaden definitions
- Need for guidelines/model to follow – to provide a unified voice
- Streamline communications
- No strings attached funding
- City to come up with programs and then hold them to the commitments
- Less obstacles/hoops
- More access to \$\$ for individual artists
- Councillng
- Engage people/community in art – for enjoyment
- Legitimize the art community
- If people don’t purchase art – it is the artists responsibility
- Need better local communication/media
- POP - Promise of Performance – CRTC
- Need more promotion of art in the media
- Need to be more creative
- This is an economic issue – we need to focus our attention and language
- Need for council to develop an arm’s length group to administer \$\$\$
- Difficult to make a living on art – many are actually subsidizing – teaching or other to jobs to keep up
- Art cannot be done part time
- People need to recognize the passion and value of artists
- Government looks after criminals/prisoners better than artists
- Need to stay in the realm of business – art is not a hobby or vocation

## What do we need:

- Partnerships – work together
- Hold city to the goal we come up with
- To agree on a goal
- make mortgages and loans possible
- look to Creative Industry Cluster document for information and guidance
- Artist in residence program
- Legal aid for artists
- Skills training – business planning, grant writing etc.
- Partnerships with business
- Volunteer assistance with business side of work
- Arts Hamilton has a role
- It take 80% of our time to find \$\$ leaving 20% for creative work
- Fewer levels in government
- To look at Europe – they have a different approach
- a workable model
- Many residents are now immigrants – unable to afford to purchase art – in Europe people value art and everyone has at least a few pieces – here is not the same as in Europe
- to change the mind set
- to educate residents on the value of art in society
- the city to promote local art and culture
- tourism brochures to focus more on local art and artists
- to put money in the hands of artists

- grants, loans, incentives – to be available on an equal basis – equitable treatment for artists – industries/education etc. all get special treatment and “breaks”
- Hamilton Library is launching a website highlighting local artists – there is a “gallery” in the library for local artists work – monthly basis
- Focus on councilors – get them out to events and meetings!!!
- Health care
- Legal aid
- Rent to own
- Skill set based business partnerships – business, legal etc.

#### **Five things to take forward**

- Funding
- Full equitable – public/private
- Education
- For community
- In schools – put the arts back into the curriculum – (artist in the classroom programs)
- Advocacy
- Need a committee for this – AAC?
- Arts council needs to be more visible – needs to have teeth
- Marketing/promotion/publicity
- City to better reflect local art/artists – but not exclusively
- Open concept gallery in city hall?
- Media – better communication
- Major activity to bring the arts together
- Comprehensive strategies
- Professional support/development

## **Support For Individual Artists (C) - Notes**

There were eight people in the group. Parameters were set up.

- working together
- step up and step back
- cell phones off
- disagree with ideas not people
- assume good intent
- let people finish
- exchange of views based on unique perspectives

The framework was to be artistic, economic, cultural needs and how to fill them.

After much discussion we broke our remarks down into five main categories.

### **1. BUILDING ON CHANGE IN ATMOSPHERE AND CULTURE.**

- what are the possibilities
- reciprocal acknowledgment of our needs and concern

### **2. FUNDING FOR ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT**

- a platform for discussion between artists eg. an association
- an arts council that funds eg. modeled on the Toronto Arts Council

### **3. PROACTIVE PROMOTION AND ENABLEMENT OF ARTISTIC ENDEAVORS**

- explore new possibilities to sell and promote work
- assistance in sales and promotion of work
- City to have fund to buy artists' work eg gifts for visiting officials
- City to have funds or to pursue private sponsorships to purchase ads in media to publicise what is going on
- City to provide legal places for posterage with featured artists
- Adapt Toronto proactive policy process about billboards where a portion of the commercial fee goes into an arts fund

### **4. BUILDINGS AND CITY HALL**

- use of buildings
- City Hall building relationships with potential owners
- clarity – requirements for use up front on zoning, taxes, development fees.
- negotiating from a position of 'yes' but this is how you do it.
- change in recognition of the place of the artist in the community
- fees that are not prohibitive
- tax incentives for studio space
- financial incentives for under used buildings

- transparency – up front information on what are requirements to do what individual wants to do

### **5. PRACTICAL INITIATIVES**

- cultural enablement plan
- partnerships with industry
- mentorships
- train locals to do restoration work / other work
- more strategic collaborations of artists to work together eg forum

### **BARRIERS**

- Arts Council that can fund – defining what process/criteria would be
- Understanding the importance and place of non-commercial art work
- Professionalism needs to be defined
- Getting past feelings that monies are 'handouts'
- Artists moving beyond adapting their work to perceived notion of what jurors want
- Language of how artists think and how the bureaucrats think
- Human resource development

## Engaging City Hall (A) - Notes

The conversation was organized loosely around the idea of a SWOT analysis of the community, but it was structured into two sections: 1) Possibilities / Strengths and Opportunities; and 2) Barriers / Weaknesses and Threats.

### Possibilities / Strengths and Opportunities:

- involvement of Mayor and councillors at this event seen as a positive
- though it was noted that none of the politicians want to be seen as not supporting the arts — this can be seen as an advantage as well
- would like to see improved municipal funding
- moving into an election year — is a good year to impress upon politicians the value and importance of the arts and the arts community
- arts and culture split from recreation seen as a positive
- arts as viable occupation
- pride of place
- need to look at new economic models — aside from existing grants in place, are there new and different possibilities (art rental programs, etc.)
- need to educate the market — does the greater community know what it's missing?
- Winnipeg, Culture on Every Corner — eg. of forward-thinking municipality

- Probus, a group of retired senior executives who still maintain strong connections in the Hamilton business community; they meet regularly — suggestion made that this group could represent strong mentorship possibilities (the notion of mentorship came up a lot)
- Hamilton has a forward-thinking arts community, need the gov't to do the same
- need to build stronger connections between the greater community and the artists in Hamilton — a strong, personal connection would lead to sales
- greater community and the gov't need to be introduced to artists
  - event-based
  - adopt a politician / walk with an artist / work a day with an artist
  - put high-profile people into arts situations/settings
  - perhaps introduce people through on-going video installations / presentations at City Hall and other civic / public locations
- connections / dialogue / personal contact needs to happen
- huge opportunity with the opening of City Hall — needs to involve art and performances, and artist participation needs to be paid
- same for PanAm Games
- procurement policy priorities need to be established
- need to develop a database or website of

- artists and contact information
- “beef up” AAC — be the main advocacy group, also need to influence policy, establish an arms-length council (this could be through AAC advocacy)
- arts council to provide: funding; professional development; advocacy at local, provincial, and federal levels

### Barriers / Weaknesses and Threats:

- budget priorities do not align with the needs of the arts community
- politicians offer “lip service, but no meaningful engagement”
- arts message can come across as elitist
- not explaining ourselves very well
- many see arts as expendable
- advocacy is a barrier — we don't have one voice
- we need a clear message to speak to both Hamiltonians and the local gov't
- lack of transparency across the board in both gov't and arts community
- communication problem amongst those in the community — organizations, artists, festivals, etc. don't know about each other
- if the community can't communicate well and doesn't know what's going on, how can we expect Council to know
- socio-economic status
- City Hall is not forward-thinking
- “old, wise guys” need to be converted

(think Probus), they don't buy into the arts community

- the example came up of Jim Balsillie and the others at RIM being a positive force for arts in the KW region, but someone mentioned with them it's like preaching to the converted – here the men with money need to be sold on the arts
- risk adverse
- assumption that artists / performers will work for free, that they're in it because they love it
- Ward system is a barrier – there's in-fighting, and an organization's challenges are increased if the councillor for the ward is “unenlightened”
- PanAm offers an opportunity for the arts if there is support and interest in including the arts in the process, but it can also be a drawback for the community – the games can be a money drain and reduce funding in other areas including the arts
- history/heritage in the City is at once a positive and a negative for the community – stuck in the past, need to move forward

**Priorities:**

1. AAC

- develop the AAC or another group (Arts Hamilton??) into a respected arms-length council / group that can provide funding and advocacy for artists in the community

2. Develop Message

- advocacy and networking
- mentorship
- change mindsets / education

3. Budget

- budget for arts needs to increase
- the idea of 1% of City funding came up (there are other municipalities that do this)
- grant process needs to include individual artists
- need arms-length arts council

4. Opportunities at City Level for Artists and Arts Groups

- can't miss these opportunities
- City Hall opening
- PanAm Games
- Procurement Policy needs to be established and followed

5. Research Best Practices

- Paul Shaker from City Hall joined the group once the priorities had been established and provided his input on the AAC / Arts Hamilton question
- he noted that Arts Hamilton may be ineffective now, but asked if the beginning structure was there and worth building on
- he suggested that the AAC should continue to exist and work closely with the City and with whatever new arts council exists so that there is constant communication between all three groups – he believes that should the AAC take on the role of an arms-length arts council, the

communication stream with Council would be lost

## Engaging City Hall (B) - Notes

### Recommendations/Actions

1. Communication
  - telling the artists story
  - communication channels
  - building our case for support
2. Education
  - increasing the education of councillors
  - “Take Your Councillor to Work Day”
3. Funding
  - support to individual artists
  - artist housing (ability to own home)
  - increase city grant budget
4. Champions/Advocates
  - Empower the AAC to be what they need to be
  - Review selection process
  - Communication resources
5. Building Consensus
  - work to build support and consensus within and without the arts community
  - broadening the base of supporters

### BACKGROUND NOTES

#### *Why are you here?*

- love municipal politics
- housing for artists
- relationship between art and

- gentrification of neighbourhoods
- connecting locally
- incubators
- Speaking to the politicians and education elected officials
- Pan Am an opportunity for arts events and leverage (use Vancouver Olympics as a model)
- Give familiarization tours
- Identify all the positive activities and link and celebrate successes
- Look at needs
- Create business plans
- Art voice on issues that are not just about arts – create political weight.
- How to address different needs (between individuals and organizations)
- New partnerships with social services – joint lobbying – stop the ‘us and them’ battle
- Need to know who we all are to talk to City Hall. Politicians don’t get it or understand art – can happen one-on-one education
- Better articulate who we are and why we do it
- Tourism industry
- City Hall departments are insular – need better links
- Pan Am and sustainability (group notes that this is a one-off type leverage)
- Affordable housing
- Pensions

- Income resources (Hamilton average \$21,000)
- Look at “Options for Homes” (Toronto/Vancouver)
- Transform City Hall way of thinking
- Look at funding allocations – big and small organizations – where is equity?
- We’re ignoring diverse communities
- Educate community, businesses and City Hall
- Proactive 2-way education and communication between City Hall and community
- Political activism
- Get in touch with MPP
- Look at “Jobs for Prosperity” model

### BARRIERS

- Language (‘city hall speak’ vs ‘arts speak’)
- Silos – need more integration
- Narrow base of support = lack of support
- Richard Florida bunk – economic forecast will not benefit artists in the long run
- Public education
- Accountable politicians and lack of political will
- Communities lack of knowledge and understanding of bureaucratic process
- Lack of access
- Lack of champions

- Communication barriers between AAC and City
- AAC selection process (current members need input on selection of new members)
- The Wards – councillors tend to look at wards only – no city-wide perspective

## **Sustainability of Arts Organizations**

### **Sustainability means—**

- 1/ Financial
- 2/ Operational
- 3/ Infrastructure
- 4/ Community Profile
- 5/ Community support
- 6/ Membership – core constituency

#### **1/ Financial:**

- Need reliable / sustainable funding from all levels of government – core funding
- Other funders are not enough
- Municipal core funding drives level of commitment of other levels of government
- Level of support is miniscule
- Support only covers projects
- Due to low level of funding there is a sense of competitiveness among groups for limited resources – scarcity model of support

#### **2/ Operational:**

- Need operational support
- Need staffing support versus volunteer driven groups
- Human Resources development requires financial commitment
- Human Resources are overworked and underpaid

#### **3/ Infrastructure:**

- Need infrastructure support – financial and facilities

- Build the centres like HECFI & Hamilton Place
- Need arms length organization such as St. Catharines Cultural Project Program
- Co-operative Centres for groups to work together in a common space versus competition results in impact

#### **4/ Community Profile:**

- Need reliable and professional promotions campaign on behalf of all arts centres
- Need to be known and seen as economic driver
- Culture Department Campaign to raise profile of arts community by appeal to self-interest, core values of creativity, artistry, quality of life
- Culture Department to communicate and advocate on behalf of arts organizations to councillors, business, and other potential partners and funders
- Invitations to Business Community such as Innovation Park, BBB, Tourism Hamilton to work on synergistic relationship with cultural community
- How do we measure impact for values in quantifiable terms?
- City funded feasibility plan re—culture as quality of life and economic driver
- Separate Culture & Art from Recreational Centres and Social Services budgets
- Professional Model of Innovation versus Bureaucratic model of organizational structure

- City Councillors participate on Board level adds clout & profile
- Regular Lists of arts organizations and their activities directed to Councillors
- Partnered groups in common space is strength in numbers for greater impact

#### **5/ Community Support:**

- Culture Department needs to take a leadership and bridging role
- “Round Tables” – city provides contact list, human resources to co-ordinate and meeting spaces for regular contact between groups
- Bring Executive Directors together to work on common challenges
- Need connection between Ward representatives and organizations
- Invitations that are responded to with participation of municipal representatives and community dignitaries to witness, be present, and participate
- Measure City Councillors “position” on arts to collate and disseminate to community prior to electione
- Need to look at co-operative models for artistic organizational structure
- Need greater number of partnerships
- Arts Hamilton is not seen as grants funder
- Youth is underrepresented in representation at decisionmaking
- Youth is underrepresented in youth arts initiatives

**6/ Core Constituency – Membership:**

- City support on professional development of arts human resources
- Culture division advocacy for artists in education
- Liaison with Board of Education to advocate for youth education and mentorship by emerging, mid-career, and established artists – make them visible in our schools

**PRIORITIES**

1/ Arms length Organization to assist city in funding organizations:

- Funding body to provide a greater level of funding across the board

2/ Culture Department to Lead in Community Building:

- Within the sector as well as liaison with Board of Education and Business / Corporate Groups for arts sector—Innovation Groups
- Regular “Round Tables”
- 

3/ Partnership expansion with a co-operative model of:

- Common resources such as spaces, infrastructure, human resources, professional development for all arts organizations

4/ Effective Advocacy with Knowledge Dissemination System:

- Inform and educate Council & community, to raise profile of arts community

as important sector within region as quality of life indicator—Culture website

- Adopt a Councillor
  - Business on behalf of Arts
- 5/ Infrastructure Support & Sponsorship:
- City property to subsidize arts organizations through shared and subsidized space, rent and tax relief
  - No tax for arts organization infrastructure buildings

## Appendix C – Participant Evaluations

- Nicely done!
- Great job. Informative and indicative of a genuine and serious desire for change on the part of the City. Kudos to all for your efforts.
- The middle class few have access to this process – it does not represent the ‘the arts community’. The mapping project to assess the entire communities needs and includes arts – music – dance – theatre – performance – marginalized populations. Outreach is needed – more meetings that invite/include the marginalized perspective.
- A well organized day that provided a lot of new information and perspectives. I hope that this will create connections and bonds to help the ‘arts’ in the future. My only concern is that this process moves forward, that momentum is not lost and more concrete actions are made in moving forward.
- Very well organized. Good cross section of arts folks attending. Good discussions. Looking forward to the outcomes. Recommend more garbage containers! See you in the spring!
- The event was thought provoking. Everyone became wise enough regarding the topic for the betterment of the artists. Different ideas were exchanged between the diverse thoughts. A lot of advice and suggestions were provided for the BIG PICTURE to work on it.

Overall it was a very good event.  
Well done.

- Discussion on the formation of an arms length arts council similar to the Toronto Arts Council needs to key on the fact that no mature city in Canada exists without one – it is a sign of a developed, grown up community.
- Great opportunity to learn from role models and communities that are ahead of Hamilton – super ideas. Excellent opportunity to share and collaborate on collective needs and opportunities. Thank you. Do it annually.