

September 10, 2020

Written submission to: The Community Pandemic Recovery Task Force

Submitted by: Susan Taylor

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"Arts, culture and heritage is not a special interest group, unless a \$25 billion economy and 300,000 jobs are considered of special interest."¹

Public art galleries and museums are an integral part of Ontario's visual arts sector and hold a key role in the province's economy. They are part of Ontario's arts and culture industry, which represents \$25 billion or approximately 3.3 percent of the province's GDP.² The sector employs approximately 300,000 cultural workers or 4.3% of the province's labour force.³

With an annual revenue of about \$106 million, tourism is the largest economic driver in the City of Kawartha Lakes, with visitor spending at cultural tourism destinations in the Kawartha Lakes at over \$1.8 million dollars and over \$6 million dollars on retail product.

In the four Strategic Priority Areas of the Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan 2020-2023 Culture is acknowledged as an important community building component within Exceptional Quality of Life.

The City's commitment to the Cultural sector within the Strategic Plan is to; Provide, Partner, Facilitate and Advocate.

Due to the global pandemic and state of emergency created by COVID-19 in 2020 in our municipality, it is understandable that our municipality's priorities are being redirected towards the critical and essential services necessary to maintain the health and safety of our community.

¹ Mayor Andy Letham, City of Kawartha Lakes, May 2019

² "Provincial and Territorial Culture Indicators.2017" Statistics Canada, 25 April 2019

³ "Artists in Canada's Provinces and Territories in 2016", Hill Strategies, 27 November 2019

In reviewing the Mission of the Community Pandemic Recovery Task Force to, *“provide advice and recommendations to Council and Staff on resources and support required to ensure community recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic”*, I wondered how the Task Force could exclude an acknowledged economic driver for our municipality from any representation within a community task force focused on economic recovery.

The cultural not-for-profit organizations of our community are not special interest groups. They are not-for-profit organizations that want to be able to survive so that we can work to contribute to our community’s economic recovery.

As the Creative Economy has been identified by our municipal government as #4 of the ten top economic drivers for the City of Kawartha Lakes, it is unfortunate that there is an apparent disparity among the representatives of the Task Force on the value of an acknowledged economic driver within our municipality. The City’s Economic Development Department has staff dedicated to the development of the Cultural sector, Donna Goodwin the Economic Development Officer for Arts & Culture for the City of Kawartha Lakes.

I would welcome the opportunity for further discussion with the Task Force to provide insights that can work towards the Task Force’s goal to provide, *“recommendations for partnerships and working groups in order to best leverage existing programs and services”* to Council.

I wish to thank the Community Pandemic Recovery Task Force for their work towards our municipality's economic recovery and I look forward to your response.

Best regards,

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