



Clerks Services Staff Report

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Report Title: Arts & Culture Grants – Three Sisters Cultural Centre
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Reviewed By: Deputy Clerk Alex Smyth
Final Review: Senior Management Team

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Township of Woolwich, considering Report C18-2024 respecting Arts & Culture Grants – Three Sisters Cultural Centre:

1. Approve an Arts & Culture Grant request of \$3,000 to be funded through the Transient Accommodation Tax Reserve Fund to support the 2024 Kissing Bridge Art Tour; and
2. Approve an Arts & Culture Grant of \$750 to support the Spirit Humanity Earth: Exploring Healing Through Art event.

Background:

Through the 2024 budget deliberations, Council approved a new grant category for Arts and Culture (A & C) Grants, with a budget allocation of \$3,000. This new category is instrumental in highlighting, supporting and promoting the various avenues of arts and culture available in Woolwich. The Grants and Special Assistance Policy was updated in April to include the new category as well as incorporate changes to streamline and enhance the operation of the program. As a result of A & C Grants approved earlier this year, the remaining 2024 A & C Grant budget is \$1,250.

In July, Adrienne Carter, CEO of the Three Sisters Cultural Centre, connected with staff regarding potential grant applications for two events/initiatives to be run in the fall – the 2024 Kissing Bridge Art Tour in October and a new initiative, Spirit Humanity Earth: Exploring Healing Through Art in September. Staff worked with Ms. Carter on the best

avenues within the Grants Program, and two applications were submitted, each requesting an Arts & Culture (A&C) Grant of \$3,000.

Comments:

2024 Kissing Bridge Art Tour

In 2023, Council supported the Kissing Bridge Art Tour by approving the Centre's funding request of \$5,000, funded through the Transient Accommodation Tax (MAT) Reserve Fund. In addition, the 2023 event received a waiver of the full amount of the fee associated with the rental of the Community Room at the Woolwich Memorial Centre.

The applicant reports that the 2023 event was a great success, noting that it was held in 10 separate venues, welcomed over 3,000 people, and achieved a tourism spending impact to the Township of over \$92,000. The applicant hopes to grow the event's reach from last year which saw a noticeable increase in visitors coming to the tour as a destination, rather than past events where the Artists found that attendees happened upon the event. The Centre partnered with eight businesses in the St. Jacobs area, and intend on doing the same again in 2024, to encourage overnight and longer stays.

The Centre's request for 2024 is \$3,000, which the applicant explains is to support the marketing and wayfinding needs to ensure visitors know about and find their way to the venue, a marketing plan that will include radio and digital ads, and a brochure featuring the participating artists, local business offers and event map. The 2024 Tour will be held at the Waterloo Rod & Gun Club, is free to attend, and has sought/received funding from other sources, including multi-year funding from a Provincial program.

As the event generates tourism in Woolwich, MAT can be utilized to fund the request. The applicant has stated in the application that the event will partner with local businesses, including hotels, to provide discounts for those traveling to attend the Kissing Bridge Art Tour. This is a good example of an event that fits with the purpose of the MAT tax where this event will attract visitors to Woolwich and have the potential for them to extend their stay and explore the rest of Woolwich Township and the Region of Waterloo. Staff recommend using this funding source to grant the \$3,000 request as there is sufficient funding in this Reserve Fund and the event qualifies for an Arts and Culture Grant. Furthermore, staff recommend using MAT funding for this request as the balance of the Arts and Culture budget is low and staff expect more Arts and Culture applications throughout the remainder of 2024.

Spirit Humanity Earth: Exploring Healing Through Art

The Three Sisters Cultural Centre is launching a new initiative scheduled for September 7th to October 6th, 2024, titled "Spirit Humanity Earth: Exploring Healing Through Art". The applicant describes the event as a showcase for, and in collaboration with, Indigenous Artists and art inspired by Indigenous teachings.

According to the applicant, the exhibition will focus on the work by community artist, Suellen Evoy-Oozeer, in her collection S.H.E. is Healing. It consists of 13 spirit portraits

of the woman's sacred power to heal Spirit, Humanity and Earth. The spirit portraits are colourful, gold accented, acrylic paintings depicting women who are using their power of healing to heal themselves, communities, and the planet. The applicant describes the exhibit as giving a visual representation and celebrating the unseen power we have to heal Spirit, Humanity and Earth.

The applicant adds that the show will be complemented by an outdoor art exhibit, Woodland After Dark, which is comprised of a series of metal sculptures in the style of Woodland Art (ie: Norval Morrisseau). Six Nations artist, Adam Monture, worked in collaboration with Jeremy Freiburger from Colbalt Connects to transform the figures in Adam's paintings into these near life-size sculptures that are lit at night. The figures, like the style of Woodland Art, reflect Haudenosaunee connection to nature and the animals with whom we share this land.

The application aligns with the Arts & Culture Grant program criteria and eligibility as per the Grants and Special Assistance Policy. The initiative aligns with the Community Strategic Plan and our commitment to community connection. However, due to budgetary limitations, staff are recommending approval of \$750 of the \$3,000 grant request.

Interdepartmental Impacts:

None.

Financial Impacts:

The total 2024 Arts & Culture Grant program budget at the beginning of the year was \$3,000. Currently, \$1,250 is remaining after previous grant approvals this year. The applicant is requesting two, \$3,000 grants for a total of \$6,000. Staff is recommending one \$3,000 grant funded by the MAT Reserve to support the Kissing Bridge Art Tour and a \$750 A & C Grant to support the Spirit Humanity Earth: Exploring Healing Through Art event. If approved, this would leave a balance of \$500 of the remaining 2024 A & C Grant program budget.

In only its first year, the Arts & Culture Grants program has been more popular than anticipated. In fact, all non-annual grants categories have received significantly more funds requested than the budget has available, especially in the first half of the year. While Council has approved past requests using funding sources such as the Operating Contingency Reserve, staff do not recommend that as a funding source to provide the balance or entirety of requests when budgets cannot fund the full request. As staff have seen this year that the demand for grants is increasing, Council may wish to consider the popularity of the non-annual grants program during upcoming budget discussions and whether increases are needed.

Community Strategic Plan Impacts:

Consideration of Township grants aligns with the following Community Strategic Plan priorities.

- Empower communities to be adaptable and engaged: *Strengthen and leverage volunteer resources by supporting community events and initiatives that foster and promote connection.*
- Maintain an innovative customer service focus: *Support volunteer initiatives with dedicated staff resources and grant distribution.*
- Expand focus to include Community Events and Programs: *Create a greater sense of belonging and social cohesion among residents and showcase the municipality's unique identity.*

The two grant requests from the Three Sisters Cultural Centre are for events and initiatives that promote cultural awareness, celebrate diversity in art and local artists, and to seek funding to help support the volunteer-based organization, promotion, and operation of these events/initiatives.

Conclusion:

Staff are recommending approval of a \$3,000 Arts & Culture Grant for the Kissing Bridge Art Tour, funded via the Transient Accommodation Tax (MAT) Reserve Fund, and a \$750 Arts & Culture Grant, for the Spirit Humanity Earth event, funded through the 2024 Arts & Culture Grant program.

Attachments:

1. Grant Application – Kissing Bridge Art Tour 2024
2. Experience Ontario Final Report – Kissing Bridge Art Tour 2023
3. Grant Application – Spirit Humanity Earth
4. Sample Artwork