



Delegation Request To Appear Before Township Council

I/we would like to appear as a delegation at the Council meeting on

September 9, 2019

(Council meeting date requested)

at the ►

- ☒ 4:00pm Regular Afternoon Meeting
☐ 7:00pm Regular Evening Meeting

Name of delegate or organization wishing to appear

Edith Krause (board chair) on behalf of Fort Gallery

1 Topic

The topic of discussion is (be specific, provide details, and attach additional information, if required)

Topic: Support for the Fort Gallery during transition period

The Fort Gallery has operated as a non-profit society providing a contemporary arts venue in Fort Langley for the public for fifteen years. The gallery is transitioning from a co-op structure to an artist-run centre; in order to qualify for funding from other levels of government (the B.C. Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts), we must demonstrate support at the local government level. Our aim is to become self-sustaining in two or three years.

2 Additional Information

Purpose of presentation

☐ Information only ☐ Request letter of support ☒ Request funds ☐ Other

Desired resolution

The Fort Gallery recently received a cultural grant for \$5000 from Metro Vancouver; we request that the TOL match this amount.

Activities to date relative to the matter

3 Meeting Location

Fraser River Presentation Theatre, 4th Floor
 Township of Langley Civic Facility
 20338 - 65 Avenue, Langley, BC V2Y 3J1

Office use only

☐ Approved ☐ Declined ☐ Other

Applicant informed



An appeal for financial assistance from the Township of Langley for the Fort Gallery

The Fort Gallery has been a significant part of the cultural fabric of Fort Langley for fifteen years. It was founded in 2005 as an artist co-op gallery and incorporated as a non-profit society in 2006. As a non-commercial space, the mandate of the gallery has been to provide a venue for the exhibition of contemporary art: art that is often experimental, not necessarily marketable, and expressing ideas to inspire and generate discourse on important topics.

Until recently, the Gallery was funded primarily through co-op members' fees of between \$30 and \$110 per member per month. This guaranteed the members exhibition space some time during the year, as part of a group, duo or solo exhibition, depending on their level of fees. Gallery members met on a regular basis and collectively ran the gallery: maintained and tended the gallery, held fundraisers, made decisions regarding programming, hung shows, organized and hosted openings and arts events, etc. The Board of Directors was selected from the gallery members, and took on administrative tasks.

The co-op model has always been problematic. Because of the barriers of the cost of co-op membership and the onerous nature of the volunteer responsibilities, it is difficult to attract and maintain a sustainably sized group to finance and run the gallery. Many artists simply object to having to pay to exhibit their work; some in the art world see co-op galleries as vanity galleries, and this is unappealing. Young artists have difficulty affording the membership fees; mid-career artists, most of whom have other full-time employment, find the volunteer component too demanding; and older, retired artists often find both to be a challenge.

As you are undoubtedly aware, Langley has no public arts centre other than the Centennial Museum, which splits its mandate between exhibiting art and historical artifacts. While there are plans to build an arts centre, this will take several years. In the meantime, the Fort Gallery meets the need for a venue for contemporary art in our community, a need that is growing as the community grows. The gallery provides an opportunity for diverse members of our community to meet and engage on important social and cultural matters, and so helps to enhance community development. In addition, the Fort Gallery adds to the appeal of Fort Langley as a visitors' destination; many of its patrons also visit the local shops and restaurants.

In an effort to save the Fort Gallery, and to make it more inclusive of artists in our community and region, we have restructured it into an artist-run centre. The gallery co-op membership has been dissolved and replaced with a society membership and general board; the society constitution has been amended to reflect these changes. We are also applying for registered charity status to assist in fund-raising and grant eligibility. The programming of the gallery

will focus on curated solo or collective exhibitions chosen through an external adjudication process from submitted proposals, an annual juried group exhibition and an annual group fundraising show for society members. Each of these public exhibits will include opening receptions with artist talks where the public can interact and dialogue with the artists, as well as additional evenings of performing arts events including music, poetry, story-telling, theatre, or dance. All these events are free and open for the public's edification, support local and emerging artists and provide opportunities to engage in meaningful discourse on topics of current and cultural relevance.

As an artist-run centre, the gallery will eventually be eligible for sustainable operating funding through the B.C. Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. However, in order to gain eligibility, the gallery must first prove itself to be a legitimate artist-run centre. This means that it is primarily run by artists, open to proposals by all artists, and that exhibiting artists are paid artist fees as stipulated by Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC). This probationary period can last several years; to help bridge the gap, there are project grants for community arts development available through the B.C. Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. However, these grants are insufficient to meet the gallery operating costs. In addition, the gallery society must prove that it has support at the level of local government before agencies at the provincial and federal level are willing to invest in it.

The Fort Gallery has applied for and received funding from the Township of Langley through Community Grants of up to \$2500 for the last five years, and we are very grateful for this. In addition, the Fort Gallery received grants of \$2500 in 2017 and \$5000 in 2019 from Metro Vancouver. The anticipated annual operating costs of the gallery for 2020, when we begin paying artists' fees, will be in excess of \$50,000. With the loss of co-op fees and the increased operating costs, the gallery needs to find new and creative sources of funding. With only one paid staff person, an office manager for ten hours per week, the difficult task of fundraising falls on volunteers. We have begun additional fundraising endeavors: a number of art workshops for adults and children, ticketed social events, solicitation of corporate sponsorship, a gift shop in the gallery office space, and a campaign to enlist Fort Gallery Society ("friends of") members who pay an annual fee of \$40 in exchange for discounts from ticketed events. We will continue to look for new funding opportunities.

As a vote of confidence and recognition of the value of the service that the Fort Gallery provides our community, and to assist in the future survival of the gallery, we request that the Township of Langley consider matching the grants we receive from Metro Vancouver until such a time that the gallery is able to obtain operating funding from the B.C. Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. This year, that grant was \$5000.

Thank-you very much for your consideration.

Edith Krause, on behalf of the Fort Gallery