

Cultural Plan Task Force

Visual and Performing Arts Community Conversation Report

Summerland Art Gallery, October 29, 2015

We had a very enthusiastic gathering of 38 artists, performers and interested individuals along with 7 Task Force members. We have really strong individual arts organizations and many talented people who collaborate and contribute to the community through workshops, sharing, showcases, and performances.

The main ideas to come out of a very lively conversation were:

1. The need for a permanent Arts Centre: a central, all-encompassing, flexible and multi-use space for artists, for performances and learning, hosting workshops, space for an Artist in Residence, and space for storage, dance, drama, music, and housing the permanent collection. For many people, arts is their recreation and the arts should have similar facilities to sports and recreation. Centre Stage is a wonderful facility but limited, and needs to be updated and re-focused.
2. Communication: Acknowledgement was made of the value of the Arts Newsletter and Arts Palette. The group felt collectively that communication needed to be enhanced: better connections between main tourist attractions and the arts, sports and recreation and the arts and the business community and the arts. "Let's let the secret out. Tell others what's going on."
3. Funding: Stable predictable, adequate, annual funding with a paid cultural coordinator who can organize funding sources and apply for grants. Arts and culture is an economic driver for communities, and start-up funding will create economic possibilities. Funding sources include: a public arts fund, culture being a line item in budget, grants, and donations. It would also be very helpful to reduce costs for arts groups for rental space and advertising.
4. A paid Cultural Coordinator who could create opportunities for growth, write applications for grants, improve communication, and promote the arts: build the value of the arts in the community.

In spite of sentiments like "We've been down this road so many times before", participants found the conversation and the actual existence of the Cultural Plan Task Force energizing. "The municipality has to get involved. Independent art groups and individual artists can't do it by themselves."