



Subject: Aurora Museum & Archives Receives Federal Grant

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Department: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Date: October 3, 2017

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request that this Information Report be placed on an upcoming General Committee or Council meeting agenda for discussion.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform Council that the Aurora Museum & Archives has received \$18,900 from the Building Communities through Arts and Heritage Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the production “The Temple of Fame” in 2018.

Background

In 2015 the Aurora Museum & Archives were gifted the original scripts for a play entitled the Temple of Fame. The Museum has photographs and programmes from this performance, but the scripts were presumed to have been lost. Last staged in 1918 in Aurora, the play featured prominent women from the community who wrote, directed and performed in the production. A total of 77 people took part at a time when the local population was around 2000.

In January, 2017 the Curator for the Museum applied for funding through the Building Communities through Arts and Heritage Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage with the hopes of re-mounting the play on its 100th anniversary.

Analysis

Temple of Fame Celebrates Women

On May 10th and 11th, 1918, the Town of Aurora bore witness to a small but impactful performance of a play entitled The Temple of Fame. Based on a poem of the same name by Alexander Pope, the play featured women throughout history pleading their case before the Goddess of Fame as to why they should win the crown. Historical personages included Queen Elizabeth I, Helen of Troy, and Laura Secord among a group of 33 women vying for the title. Originally presented in Aurora in 1900, the play was updated with new characters for its 1918 remount as a fund raiser for the Aurora Overseas Auxiliary.

Staged over two nights the play was a smash success garnering a favourable review in the Toronto Daily Star after the first night (May 11, 1918). The play also attracted the attention of surrounding communities including a branch of the Red Cross who wrote a letter some four months after the play asking the organizers if they would be willing to remount the play in Horning's Mills, some 100km away.

The year 1918 was also extremely important in the history of Women's Suffrage as for the first time most property-owning women across Canada were granted the right to vote in Federal elections.

Feminist themes and ideologies run throughout the play, many no doubt received by the audience as humorous – such as the contention by the character Woman of the Next Century proclaiming that one day a woman would be Mayor of the Town.

Now 100 years on, we are planning a four-day event to mark the anniversary of both the play and the vote, and to celebrate the achievements of local women in our community today. Despite the passing of one century since gaining the vote, the struggle for women's rights and equality still goes on.

This four-day event will be produced in partnership with community organizations and will include a remount of the Temple of Fame based on the original scripts but updated for a modern audience (local playwright Corrie Clark); a Gala Evening performance celebrating local business Women of Excellence (Aurora Chamber of Commerce); a Mother's Day performance and tea (Aurora Historical Society); an exhibition of materials from the original productions (museum Studies Program, University of Toronto); and an online exhibition of local women who excel in sport (Aurora Sports Hall

of Fame). The Aurora Camera Club will serve as the official photographers of this event.

Advisory Committee Review

None required.

Financial Implications

The 2018 Operating budget includes project costs of \$21,400, offset by \$18,900 in grant revenue and \$2,500 in ticket sales revenue for a zero net impact to the Operating Budget.

Communications Considerations

Town of Aurora Corporate Communications will assist in promoting this event through the use of social media, media release, website, and the Town of Aurora's NoticeBoard.

Link to Strategic Plan

This event supports the Strategic Plan goal of Supporting an Exceptional Quality of Life for All through its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objectives within this goal statement:

Expand opportunities and partnerships that contribute to the celebration of culture in the community.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

None.

Conclusions

To inform Council about the Federal grant received by the Aurora Museum & Archives and the partnerships created by the Museum to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Temple of Fame.

Attachments

None.

Previous Reports

None.

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on September 13, 2017

Departmental Approval



Al Downey
Director
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Approved for Agenda



Doug Nadorozny
Chief Administrative Officer