



Minutes

Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee

May 4, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

City Hall - 808 2nd Avenue East - Council Chambers

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Chair Richard Thomas
Councillor John Tamming
Member Mary Anne Alton
Member Tom Burri
Member Megan Celhoffer
Member Constance Maconaghie
Member Peter Tovell
Member David Taylor

STAFF PRESENT:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager
Aidan Ware, Director and Chief Curator
Kim Skene, Operations Coordinator

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- 4.a Minutes of the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee meeting held on March 2, 2022

AG-220504-001

Moved by Member Celhoffer

"THAT the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee approves the

5. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no deputations or presentations.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION PERIOD

There were no questions from the public.

7. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR WHICH DIRECTION IS REQUIRED

There were no correspondence items presented for consideration.

8. REPORTS OF CITY STAFF

8.a Report AG-22-004 from the Director and Chief Curator Re: Tom Thomson Art Gallery - May 2022 Update

Before providing an overview of her report, the Director stated that museums have never been more important than they are now. She said that Canadian Museums Association Board president Michael Wallace and director Heather George appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in February to speak about the impact of the pandemic on Canada's Cultural sector. Quoting from an article published recently in Muse Magazine, the Director stated: "CMA's representatives told MPs that the pandemic has brought in sharp relief historical inequities and grievances, and exacerbated divisions within our civil society. They added that as safe places of reflection, museums have a key role to play in healing Canadian society and in helping it move forward." The Director feels that The TOM continues to offer this safe place of healing for this community.

When reviewing updates on Gallery exhibitions, the Director added that the previous show comprised of works by artist Brent Henry was featured in Escarpment Magazine and had many positive responses from visitors. The exhibition included a resource space for more information on the ongoing impact of the Residential School System. It provided a space for healing as well as for the making of traditional medicine bundles.

When discussing programming, the Director reminded the Committee that staff reports are written well in advance of committee meetings and often include a forecast of events. Addressing concerns and comments on the measurement of success within programs at the Gallery, the Director stated that though well-planned, sometimes attendance is lower than anticipated at some events. Referring to a recent, private event held in conjunction with the M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre, the Director stated that registrants cancelled due to illness present in the Indigenous Community and reminded the Committee that

statistically, Indigenous peoples have a much higher infection rate, and experience much more severe illness, than non-Indigenous people. Indigenous peoples also have a different outlook regarding gathering in times of illness, as discussed in a cultural training session in which the Director had recently participated. There was significant planning and partnership involved with this event, and it was an essential step in developing this critical relationship, regardless of attendance.

During the discussion, a Committee Member commented that the Advisory Committee needs to hear what programs did not work, as well as about those that were successful; Members need to know this so that resources are used appropriately. The Director stated that the event was funded by the Canada Council for the Arts. Truth and Reconciliation initiatives are one of this funder's priorities and one of the Gallery's strategic priorities. Another Committee Member commented that the event was very successful and a significant first step in building trust with the local Indigenous community. All the Gallery's programs, events, and activities are evaluated and discussed with respect to their successes, challenges, and opportunities.

The Director indicated that a significant challenge for the Gallery's programming is the lack of flexible space for children's activities with a much-needed studio ("messy space") and asked the Committee to think about some interim solutions. The lack of a studio space is significantly affecting the Gallery's ability to generate revenue from summer camps and other programs.

The Director noted that there will be extended hours at the Gallery for the summer, on Thursday evenings and Saturdays.

The Director updated the Committee on the accessibility improvements and stated that it is hoped that the Gallery can remain open to the public throughout the construction but that the safety of the art and visitors is a top priority.

Referring to the attached Tom Thomson Art Gallery Annual Work Plan, the Director stated that she would keep the Committee updated on the status of the plan and ongoing projects. There were no questions from the Committee regarding the Gallery's Work Plan.

When asked about the status of the pre-feasibility study recommended by the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Facility Expansion Ad Hoc Committee, the Director responded that staff would need to apply for funding to have the study conducted – likely in 2023.

The Director clarified that the 3D scanning of three Tom Thomson works, and the Thomson palette had just taken place last week. Once the finished product is available for public engagement, there will be announcements in the newsletter and via social media. The finished product will include digital visual files that can be viewed, zoomed in, flipped etc., to get a unique view of the artwork. One of

the Thomson works will be 3D-printed, which visitors can handle and will be utilized for educational purposes.

The Director informed the group that the next event at the Gallery would be on the morning of May 14 and will include an artist talk featuring Sorouja Moll, followed by a coffee reception.

The City Manager provided some information regarding the Service Review being conducted by third-party consultants. The Service Review will look at how the City delivers services to the public and how the City operates administratively. The consultants will interview many stakeholders, including citizens and employees, and may include some Committee Members. The purpose of the Service Review is to identify gaps in services, propose efficiencies in the delivery of services, and find cost savings. Results will be shared with the Advisory Committee through the Director's reports, and the Committee will be able to weigh in on the findings.

AG-220504-002

Moved by Member Tovell

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report AG-22-004 respecting Tom Thomson Art Gallery – May 2022 Update, the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee recommends that City Council receive the report as the Director and Chief Curator's update on the Gallery's Programming and Operations for information purposes."

Carried.

9. REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES

9.a Verbal Report from the Chair of the Fundraising Sub-Committee

Member Alton, Chair of the Fundraising Sub-Committee, provided an update on the current 2023 Calendar Project and noted that \$12,000 has been raised so far as all 12 images in the calendar have been adopted. She thanked the Advisory Committee for their role in the success of the Adopt-a-Tom portion of the calendar project.

New this year is a targeted approach to bulk sales. The Calendar Working Group will approach local realtors to purchase calendars to give away to their clients. The theme of the 2023 calendar is Grey-Bruce, so it is very appropriate for the local real estate sector. The Group has developed a complete package for the campaign containing an ask letter and package pricing. Committee Members were encouraged to contact Member Alton for a proposal package, should they have a personal contact who would be interested in a bulk purchase of the 2023 calendar in support of The TOM.

Member Alton emphasized that the fundraising campaign goes beyond calendars, it contributes to making those important community connections and provides additional community outreach for the Gallery.

AG-220504-003

Moved by Member Taylor

"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided by the Chair of the Fundraising Sub-Committee on May 4, 2022, the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes."

Carried.

10. MATTERS POSTPONED

There were no matters postponed.

11. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN

There were no motions for which notice was previously given.

12. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION

There were no correspondence items presented for information.

13. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

There was no additional business.

14. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The business contained on the agenda having been completed, Chair Thomas adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.